THese are to certifie all into whose hands this Book shall come, that these Sermons contained in this Book (on Psal. 32. 1. *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven and whose Sin is covered,*) Entituled *Gospel Remission*, and Printed for *Dorman Newman* Stationer, are the painful and profitable Labours of Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs*, and published by the best and most Exact Copy extant.

Jan. 17. 1668.

Philip Nye,
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GOSPEL REMISSION,

Or a *TREATISE* shewing, that

TRUE BLESSEDNESS CONSISTS IN

Pardon of Sin.

Wherein is Discovered

The: { *Many Gospel Mysteries therein Contained.*
Glorious Effects proceeding from it.
Great Mistakes made about it.
True Signs and Symptomes of it.
Way and Means to obtain it.

By Jeremiah Burroughs.

Being several Sermons Preached immediately after those of *The Evil of Sin* by the same Author.

And now Published by

Philip Nye, *William Greenhill*, *William Bridge*, *William Adderly*, *Matth. Mead*, *C. Helmes*.

26

The Second Edition.

The Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquities, Isai. 33---24.

London, Printed for *Dor. Newman*, and are to be sold at his Shop at the *Kings Arms* in the *Poultry*. 1674.

1674
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To the READER.

Christian Reader,

THE provident care of God is manifested toward his People in the present Preservation of, and provision for them. To have the mouths of Lions stopped when we are cast into the midst of their Den; the Waters to be a wall about us on the right hand and on the left, which in their own nature and tendency would overwhelm us, to have the Bush burning, and not consumed, are as evident tokens of the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, of Gods presence with and owning of his afflicted People now, as in the days of old; yea to have Honey out of the flinty Rock, Manna in the Wilderness, a Voice behind us, Saying, This is the way, walk in it; enforceth as great an obligation to admiration and thankfulness upon us, as upon the Israelites of old. Amongst the many English Prophets who are dead, and yet speak, the Reverend Author of the ensuing Treatise may challenge a place with the first Worthies:

thies: *His Works, not my words are the best Orators to commend him: That Scripture Encomium may be written upon his* Stepney *and* Cripplegate *Lectures,* -- This and that man was born there. *For although many now living, do through mercy enjoy able Teachers and Instructors; yet do they owe to him the Name of Father, as an Instrument of their Conversion. I may boldly apply that saying to holy* Burroughs, *which was once spoken of a Learned Divine beyond Sea:* Meruerunt viri docti etiam post funera vivere, ac docere scriptis posteros, quos infeliciter post eos nasci contigit; in eo autem virorum ordine Burroughsium reponere, nemo præter eum, qui propriæ diffidit virtuti, prohibebit.

These Sermons presented to thy view, are with the help of an able Learned Divine, (who also heard these Sermons preached,) cast into that form of a Tract that now thou seest them in, without any material Additions or Alterations. The time when the Reverend Author preached them, was next in order after those convincing Sermons, of the sinfulness of Sin, so that this Gospel Soul-Reviving Discourse was then a word spoke in due season.

In this Treatise thou hast Gospel Grace stated rightly, the Justice of God cleared, the Mercy of

God

God exalted, poor trembling ſinners incouraged to come to the Blood of Chriſt for Pardon, preſumptuous ſinners awakened out of their deadly deluding Dreams of Heaven, when they are ready to drop into Hell. In a word, here thou may'ſt take a view of the Love of the Father, the Grace of the Son, the Fountain opened for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs, Cordial Waters of Life for ſinking and fainting ſinners, here thou may'ſt behold Sin, Damning ſin, ſin that God hates, and cannot but hate; Sin that God puniſheth, and cannot but puniſh, taken off the poor believing ſinner and laid upon his Surety; ſin condemned and puniſhed in Jeſus Chriſt, and the Believing ſinner juſtifyed, pardoned, acquitted. If therefore thou prizeſt peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt, Pray for light to direct thee into a diſtinct knowledge of this Goſpel Truth, and take up this Book and read it, and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things, anſwerable to the Deſign of the Author, and the Prayer of him who heartily wiſheth thy Salvation, and groweth in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

C. Helmes.

The Stationer to the READER.

IT is now long since I undertook the Printing of this Book, and as my Incouragements were many, so I had obtained of one of those Reverend Divines that have given their attestation to it, to peruse the Work, and had his Testimony that he heard those Sermons preached, and upon perusal of them found not any thing Material left out, of what the Author Mr. Jer. Burroughs delivered, and knowing that Mr. Peter Cole (who formerly Printed many of the Author's Works) had long laid wait and endeavoured to get this Copy out of the hands of those that published the Author's Books, offering a great Reward for the same, but could not obtain it: And now at last being so much wished thereunto by his friends, being assured that as the whole is abundantly Spiritual and lively in its Matter, and that wherein the very Spirit and style of Mr. Burroughs is manifested, so there are many things (as I am informed) were never so much as touch'd upon, or handled by any other Writer, and yet are of very great Importance to be known by all Intelligent and Sober-minded men, I thought good, having this Assurance from them, to certifie so much to the Reader.

Dor. Newman.

Gospel Remission.

PSAL. XXXII. 1.

Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered.

CHAP. I.

The Text Opened, and the main Doctrine Propounded.

HAve, as you may remember in many Sermons endeavoured to shew unto you the malignity and dreadful evil that there is in Sin; And what more seasonable and suitable Argument can we now treat of, than the blessedness of Pardon of Sin? How sweet, and acceptable will this be to such souls, that by the former arguments have been made apprehensive of the dreadful evil of it? How readily will they say with the Prophet, *How beautiful are the feet of those that bring* (such) *good tidings?* Wherefore, me-thinks, while I am reading this Text, I should be like a man at an Eccho, that hears the words thereof resounded back again, by every broken hearted sinner in this Congregation, *O, blessed, blessed is the man indeed whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered.*

A word spoken in season (sayes *Solomon*) *is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*; and considering, how large I have been in opening of the *Evil of Sin* unto you, if ever a word was spoken in due season, I hope it may be out of this Text: Prov. 25. 11.

The word of Reconciliation and pardon of Sin; and if God inable me to clear up unto you the excellency of those Truths contained in this Scripture, I hope they will prove in all your eyes to be as *Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver.*

The words read, are the first words of one of *David's* Penitential Psalms, and they are indeed the genuine voice of a true Penitent; the very Character of an humble Penitential Soul; he is one that has admiring thoughts of the blessedness of the pardon of sin. I will not spend time in Analysing the whole Psalm, because the sweetness and blessedness of the Argument draws my heart to come presently to it; And blessed may your ears be, who after hearing of the dreadful evil of sin, may come to hear the blessed doctrine of Pardon; it is that which God has denyed to many thousands: And who knows but many even of those that in this Congregation have heard the sorrow of that Doctrine, are now gone (perhaps to their own place) and feel what they then heard, and much more, and are past ever hearing the argument of pardon and forgiveness of sin: that blessed sound shall never come to their ears; but the horrid noise of yelling, roarings, and curings of damned spirits, for the wrath of God that lyes heavy on them for their sin.

This Psalm in the title of it is *a Psalm of David Maschil*, that is, *a Psalm of Instruction*, or, *for Instruction*: And what is a more useful Instruction than to instruct the soul where true blessedness lyes? And what is a better instruction than to tell man the way of the pardon and forgiveness of sin? the way to true happiness? The happiness of the reasonable creature is that which many wise men thought to find out, but after all their search, they were much puzled, and in the dark, and could never come to find where it lay, by all the wisdom of the flesh, only the rational creature is capable of blessedness, because it is capable of such an act as to reflect upon it self, that is the ground why the rational creature is capable of blessedness, above all other creatures, no creature can truly be

said to be a blessed creature, but only the rational; because no creature else can reflect upon its own condition to know it self. But then not only to know our selves, but our own happiness, where our blessedness lyes; this must needs be a profitable instruction. No Philosopher did ever give such a description of happiness as this is, *Blessed is the man whose*, &c. yea, *David*, who had a Monopoly of the comforts of this world to the full, and had the Crown upon his head, sayes not, Blessed is he that is Crowned and has a Kingdom. *David* that had the riches of this world, did not say, Blessed is he that hath this worlds goods. *David* that had honours, and was reputed among the mighty men, did not say, Blessed is he that hath worldly honours. *David* that had many Victories over Enemies, sayes not, Blessed is he that rides in Triumph over his Enemies. *David* that had sumptuous Palaces, and the delights of this world, does not say, Blessed is he that has them. But in the midst of all Outward good things, *David* enjoyed in this world, he finds his blessedness to consist in this, *The pardon and forgiveness of his sins*, he pronounces them and them only blessed, whose sin is pardoned.

This Instruction of the blessedness of Pardon of Sin, as it lyes here annexed, is of weight indeed, and of infinite concernment: *Luther* sayes, *The Argument of free Justification and Remission of Sin, is that that makes a Divine*: and this may be added to that, 'tis this that makes a Christian; *To be instructed rightly in the Justification of a Sinner, is that that makes a Christian.* Nay, although we had ten thousand Instructors in other things, not only in Natural knowledge, but in Divinity too, in all the points of it; yet we could never be wise unto Salvation, except we were instructed with this instruction, in the blessedness of Justification and pardon of sin. *Luther* sayes, *Let this Doctrine lye dead, and all the whole knowledge of other Truths is to little purpose.* Therefore well may the title of the Psalm be *a Psalm of Instruction: Blessed is the man whose Transgressions are forgiven, and whose Iniquities are covered.* Wherefore our Point of Doctrine according to the words is this:

Doct. *The Blessedness of a Man, or of any Soul, consists in the free Grace of God forgiving of his sin.*

That is our point; the blessedness of any man or woman does not consist in the enjoyment of any thing in all this world, but in the free grace of God forgiving of his sin; It neither consists in any thing we can do or have, but in the free grace of God forgiving of sin; and that is the meaning of that Text, *Rom.* 4. 6, 7. which St. *Paul* cites from this place of Scripture, observe it; it is to this very purpose, even as *David* also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, *Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered.* The scope of the Apostle in this place is, to declare that the blessing of *Abraham* the father of the faithful consisted not in any thing he had or did, but in the free grace of God forgiving of his sin, *Gal.* 4. 15. sayes *Paul*, Where is the blessedness you spake of? for, *I bear you record, if possible, you would have pluckt out your own eyes, and given them to me*: Where is then the blessedness you spake of? What's the meaning of this blessedness? certainly this blessedness in my Text, it was this blessed doctrine, St. *Paul* being first that brought it to the *Galatians*, concerning the free Justification of a poor soul by faith in Jesus Christ, in the free pardon and remission of his sin by faith in Christ, this is the blessedness spoken of: Now, because the *Galatians* at the first hearing of this doctrine were so mightily taken with it, that they cryed out, O this is a blessed doctrine, Remission of Sin by the free grace of God through faith in Christ, O this is the blessedest doctrine that ever we heard, they were so taken with it, that if possible, they would have pluckt out their eyes for *Paul*, that brought them such a doctrine as this at their first hearing and receiving of it. But afterwards, the *Galatians* were turned aside by false Teachers, that had taken off the edge of their affections to this blessed Truth. Now *Paul* coming to reprove them, sayes, Where is then the blessedness you spake of, there was a time

when I firſt taught you the Doctrine of the free forgiveneſs of ſin by faith in Chriſt, and you ſaid it was a bleſſed Doctrine, and your hearts were mightily taken with it, where is it now? How comes it to paſs that your hearts are ſo taken off from the eſteem you then had of it? Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? Thus it is uſually, the Miniſters of Chriſt come and preach Doctrine to People that their hearts are taken with, their ſpirits ſtirred, and they mightily affected with the firſt hearing of it; but afterwards by ſome ſin, or the company of carnal friends, their hearts are taken off, though while they were hearing ſuch and ſuch a Truth, their hearts glowed and burned within them. God grant it may not be ſo with ſome of you, who when you heard lately the Doctrine of the Evil of Sin, your hearts were mightily affected, and you ſaid, O what a dreadful evil is there in ſin, in the leaſt ſin; and being convinced of it, you began to reform; yet afterwards you fell off again. May it not be ſaid of you, Where is the ſenſe of the Evil of Sin you ſpake of? Where is that bitterneſs upon your hearts, on the convictions you had of the evil of ſin? Where is it? What is become of it? As St. *Paul* ſayes, the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of, Where is it? What is become of all that ſtrength and power the Doctrine of Remiſſion of Sin had upon your hearts? Take another Scripture, Remiſſion of Sin is the ſpecial Bleſſedneſs of the ſecond Covenant that God made with *Abraham*; when he came to *Abraham* and told him, *In his Seed all Nations ſhould be bleſſed*, Gal. 3.17. compared with the 24. In the 17. *verſe* he ſpeaks of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, and that the Law that was 430 years after, could not diſannul the Promiſe that it ſhould be of none effect, *verſe* 24. *Wherefore then ſerved the Law?* why ſayes he, *It was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt*. The ſcope of the Apoſtle is to ſhew, that there is a Covenant of Grace beyond that of the Law, and that the Covenant of the Law is to bring us to the Covenant of Grace: and the principal thing in the Covenant of Grace is in the 24. *verſe*, *The Law*, ſayes he, *was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt*. That we might be juſtified by faith: and thereby receive

remission of our sins; if the Scripture places blessedness in the remission of sin: That it is so, I suppose is clear enough, the main business we have to do, is to shew how it is so; that is, to open unto you wherein the blessedness of the pardon of sin consists, and shew you in what particulars the blessedness of pardon of sin may appear unto you: and to that there are many things may be said.

CHAP. II.

Of the Blessedness of the Pardon of Sin, which appears 1. *Negatively in the Evil it frees us from.*

1. THat, that hath been lately delivered of the Evil of Sin, may be of great concernment to discover wherein the blessedness of pardon of sin lyes, the deliverance from so great an evil, as you heard, the evil of sin was, surely, *Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven.* If sin be so dreadful an evil as you heard, surely, Blessed is the man that is delivered from all that evil: if it remain fresh upon your minds, what the evil of sin against God was, and what it brought upon your selves; you cannot but say, this is one principal thing wherein it appears, that man or woman is blessed that hath his sin pardoned: If any man or woman be in any great danger, or under any great evil or misery, and if he be delivered from it, we say, that man is a blessed man, or a blessed woman that is quit from such a woful evil that was upon them; you account your selves happy to be delivered from any dangerous storms, and to have a calm. Are not they then happy that are delivered from the evil of sin? Let me speak a little to a poor sinner that understands what the meaning of sin is, and that understands somewhat of the dreadful evil of it: I would ask of thee Oh poor sinner, What seest thou? the answer will be, What see I? Oh I see the angry Countenance of an Infinite God against me, whose eyes are as a flaming fire looking with indignation upon me? I see

I see a black dismal cloud of the displeasure of the Almighty hanging over me! I see a most hideous and dreadful sentence of wrath ready to fall upon me! I see woe, misery, and destruction pursuing of me! I see blackness of darkness and desolation even surrounding me! I both see and feel the woful accusations of a guilty Conscience within me, condemning me; continually grating upon my soul, and terrifying me with dreadful Visions of eternal miseries to betide me! I see the chain of black guilt and horrour on my soul, that I carry with me whersoever I go! I see the bottomless gulf of eternal horrour and despair with the mouth of it wide open ready to swallow me up! Now then, this sight being presented before an enlightned and awakened Conscience: Now comes in the pardon and forgiveness of sin whereby this dreadful cloud is dispel'd, the tempest is gone, the darkness and misery vanished away, and all evil whatsoever the soul is set free from sin, and from all the dreadful consequences of it. Is not this a blessed man, comparing his former condition with his present state, looking on him as even now, having the sense of the dreadful evil of sin upon his Conscience, and the heavy burden of it on his back, ready to sink under it, into the gulph of misery, and now pardon of sin comes; O what a blessed change is this! *O blessed is the man whose sin is pardoned.* Now what God had laid unto his charge, or his own Conscience, the Law, the Devil, or the World, it is all done away, all is discharged and gone, blessed is the man that is thus delivered; *Old things are past away, and all things are become new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. it is meant not only of Sanctification, but of Justification also, he is a new creature; *Old things are past away, and all become new.* Brethren, by reason of the sin of man, there is a curse upon the whole Creation, and this old Creation must come to confusion; therefore it is an evil thing for any man to seek his happiness in any thing here in the old Creation, for there is a curse upon it, and it will come to confusion. But there is a new Creation of all in Christ, of all spiritual things in Christ: Now a sinner when he comes to have his sin pardoned and be justified, he comes into a new state, that comes in by the new Creation, the happiness of the Children comes by, and consists in the new Creation;

on; old things are done away, and he comes to be seated in the new creation in Christ; this is the first thing wherein a man or woman is blessed, Negatively, in being delivered from so great an evil.

2. *Of the Positive Blessedness of the Pardon of Sin.*

Secondly, Positively, he is a blessed man whose sins are forgiven, if we consider, the excellency of that mercy God makes that soul partaker of, whose sins are forgiven, Dan. 9. 9. *To thee Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses*, forgiveness is the fruit of glorious mercies, Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands forgiving iniquity.* Now I shall open this positively, and shew the riches of mercy in forgiveness of sin. When the Scripture applyes mercy to forgiveness of sin, it hath divers expressions, sometimes calls it *riches of mercy*, Eph. 1. 7. sometimes, *plenteous mercy*, Psal. 86. 8. sometimes, *Gods fulness of compassion*, Psal. 78. 38. sometimes, *multitude of mercies*, Psal. 51. 1. I might give divers other places, but these may suffice; it is rich, plenteous, fulness of compassions, and multitude of mercies; When God forgives sin, he shews mercies in all these expressions. For the opening of it unto you, I shall shew you what abundance of mercy God shews in the forgiveness of sin, consider mercy 1. In the Efficient, 2. In the Final cause of it.

1. *Of the Efficient Cause of Mercy in forgiveness of Sin.*

First for the Efficient Cause: there is abundance of mercy God manifests in the forgiveness of sin, he abounds in his mercy, there is a Sea, an infinite vast Ocean of mercy, in which the sins of the Elect come to be swallowed up, though their sins be many, and great, and committed with many grievous aggravations: yet when they come to an act of Justification to God, to be forgiven; I say, God comes to the soul as an infinite Ocean of mercy, that swallows up all the evil in sin, attend unto it. Look as in the mighty Ocean, whether you cast in a load or a shovell full of earth, the vast Ocean makes little difference of either;

either; ſo when a ſoul comes to God in Chriſt, when it comes to Pardon and Juſtification, whether ſins be little or great, 'tis all one, the mercy of God makes no difference at all; take heed to what I ſay, while I am ſpeaking of forgiveneſs of ſin, I ſhall make known ſo much grace, that if you abuſe it, it will be one of the moſt dreadful things that ever you did, and therefore while I go along, take heed of abuſing it, eſpecially you that deſire to hear of the pardoning mercy of God; whether your ſins be little or great, when you come to pardoning mercy, it is an infinite Ocean that ſwallows up all; thoſe that have not their ſins pardoned, whether their ſins be little or great, it makes no difference, they are truly damned for little as well as great ſins, both ſinks down into Hell, and the infinite Ocean of wrath and horror ſwallows up all: ſo in point of Juſtification, whether your ſins be little or great, it matters not, pardoning mercy ſwallows up all.

2. *Of the Final Cauſe of Mercy in forgiveneſs of Sin.*

Secondly, But further, as Mercy is an infinite Ocean that ſwallows up Sin, ſo Mercy is the Final Cauſe. It is to this end that God might manifeſt the riches of his grace; when God forgives any one ſin, this forgiveneſs comes from Gods mercy, and it is to this end, That God may declare before Men and Angels, to all eternity, what the greatneſs and infinite riches of his grace is, what the grace of God is able to do when God comes to pardon ſin; 'tis for this end, as if he ſhould ſay, Well, I am about now to pardon thy ſin, and this work I am about to do, it is for this very end, that it may be known to Men and Angels to all eternity, what the infinite riches of the infinite grace of God is able to do for poor ſinners. Now certainly, that man is a bleſſed man, if the man whoſe ſins are pardoned hath ſuch mercy ſhewed to him, and ſuch a bleſſed work upon him, as is to that end, that God may declare to all eternity what the glorious riches of grace of an infinite God is; ſurely this is a great bleſſedneſs, when God ſhall ſeparate a man or woman for this end, it muſt be very glorious; certainly therefore pardon of ſin is no light and mean thing, but

it muſt be a moſt glorious work of God whereſoever it is: And this Conſideration is a mighty Argument to uphold a poor ſoul under trouble of ſin, and a great incouragement for him to come in for pardon: Doſt thou ſee O troubled ſoul Gods wrath againſt thee, and doſt thou ſtand quaking at the apprehenſion of the evil of ſin? let not thy heart ſink, come in, and caſt thy ſelf on the free grace of God, there is a poſſibility for the pardon of thy ſin; for when God comes to pardon ſin, the mercy God ſhews in pardoning of any one ſin, he does it to the end that he might magnifie the riches of his grace to all eternity, and ſuch mercy that ſerves to that end muſt needs be glorious; And will not ſuch mercy ſerve thy turn, as muſt ſet out the infinite rich grace of God? God is pleaſed to manifeſt thus much mercy for the forgiveneſs of thy ſin; and where a ſinner is forgiven, it is this mercy that is manifeſted: when men judge of God by themſelves, they think ſlightly of him, when they judge of Gods thoughts by their own: What is the reaſon that makes ſinners have ſuch ſlight thoughts of ſin, but becauſe they judge of God by themſelves, that he abhors ſin no otherwiſe than man does, and ſo hope they may do well enough, meaſuring the infinite hatred that God hath to ſin by their own: ſo on the other ſide, the ſinner that is convinced of the dreadful evil of ſin, is ready to deſpair; Why? becauſe he judges of God by himſelf; as if the mercy of God were no other than the mercy of man; not conſidering the mercy of God in pardoning ſin, is ſuch mercy as is to ſhew his grace in the riches of it to all eternity. Well then, that man to whom ſuch mercy is ſhewn muſt needs be very bleſſed.

CHAP. III.

Of the wonderful Myſteries of Godlineſs in forgiveneſs of Sin.

THirdly, Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſins are forgiven, becauſe there is a glorious myſterie of godlineſs in forgiving of ſin; the work of God in forgiving a ſinner hath abundance of glorious

glorious myſteries in it, the Argument ſtands thus; That man or woman for whom God ſhall work, ſuch a work as hath multitude of glorious myſteries in it; that man or woman is bleſſed: But where ever ſin is forgiven, God works for that ſoul ſuch a ſtrange work, the ſtrangeſt that ever he did; a work that hath ſo many admirable myſteries in it, that in the opening of them will declare every way that this ſoul is bleſſed. And this is the buſineſs I would now do, to open the myſteries that are in the forgiveneſs of ſin; and it is to this end, that as I might ſet before you the great work of God in pardoning ſin, ſo alſo that you might have higher thoughts of it than ever you had before, for that's it I aim at, to raiſe up the thoughts of men to the right underſtanding of this great point of the Juſtification of a ſinner, that ſo you may ſanctifie Gods Name, by having ſuch thoughts of it as the thing it ſelf calls for.

Of the firſt Myſterie, It is by means of a Mediator.

1. Where ſin is forgiven, it is by means of a Mediator, between God and the Soul, it is through the Mediation of the Son of God, obſerve it, for there is no point in all Religion is of greater uſe to underſtand, than this point of the way of God in pardoning of ſin, becauſe of the many myſteries of God contained in it; I hope I ſhall make it appear it is no ſlight work and buſineſs: Mark then, when God pardons ſin, 'tis always done through the mediation of the Son of God; God never pardons any ſinner as a Prince does; when a Malefactor hath offended him, he comes and humbles himſelf, caſts himſelf down at his feet, and cryes, I pray Sir forgive me, and he ſayes, Well, I will forgive you; God never forgives any ſin thus; and yet it is thus with people when they come to God for pardon, moſt of them never think of any other way. Friends, there muſt be a great deal more than ſo: for whoſoever hath his ſins forgiven, it muſt be by the vertue of the mediation and interceſſion of the Son of God, he muſt ſtand up before the Father, and mediate for thy ſoul: if all the Angels in Heaven ſtood up to mediate, it would not be ſufficient; but the Son of God alone muſt do it; 'tis as if a Malefactors condition was ſo, that the mediation

of all the Nobles could not prevail with the King for a pardon, but there must be the mediation of the Prince himself to obtain it: So I say, poor soul, thou maist think it a slight business, but know if ever thou art forgiven, it must be by the mediation of the Son of God, he must stand up to mediate for thee, and plead, Oh Father let such a poor soul that hath been a Sabbath-breaker, a Lyar, a Drunkard, an Unclean person, let his sins be forgiven, and let him not be damned, Father put in his Name for pardon: I shall not speak of it how Christ mediates, but that is and has been his work from all eternity, to mediate and make intercession for those he saw before in the eternal Counsel of God should live in such times; and whatever pardon of God is gotten, it is through him; and if thou poor man ever comest to be pardoned, know Christ hath been mediating to God the Father for thee; Oh Father, such a poor creature that dwells, it may be, in such a Cottage, or in such an obscure place, let his name be put in for forgiveness. And now, is not this a blessed thing, that thou a poor creature shouldst have the Son of God to mediate for thy name to be put in for pardon! this of a truth is so, if there be any truth in the Divinity of the Word, it is in this, That all the forgiveness and pardon any creature hath, it is by the mediation of the Son of God, and his heart was upon it from all eternity; surely here is abundance of grace in this one thing, take heed of abusing it; this is the first mysterie, you must not look for pardon of sin in a natural way to cry for forgiveness, but you must go in the Name of the Mediator in this mystical way.

Of the second Mysterie, It is through Christs undertaking the Debt upon himself.

2. The second mysterie is this, 'Tis not Christs intreating the Father will serve the turn. If ever any sin be forgiven, I beseech you take notice of it, for I speak in the Name of God, and therefore must take heed of speaking any thing but the Truths of God unto you; if any sin be pardoned, it is not for the Prayer of Christ, that will not do it: But God the Father sayes, Son, if you would have the sins of poor souls forgiven, you must

muſt take the debt upon your ſelf, you muſt be their Surety, and you muſt enter into Bonds to pay every farthing of what debt the ſinners owe, you muſt pay all if you will undertake for them, ſo it is, for I will never come upon themſelves for it, but on you: Certainly there are theſe tranſactions between God the Father, and God the Son, from all eternity about the pardoning of any ſin, however you commit a ſin, and think not of it, and cry, Lord have mercy upon me, and ſo you have done with it, there's an end, you think that is all: But I ſay unto thee, if thy ſin be pardoned, Chriſt muſt take the debt upon himſelf, and be thy Surety, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He made him to be ſin for us that knew no ſin*; the way of pardon is by a tranſlation of all our ſins upon Chriſt, Chriſt himſelf God bleſſed for ever, the Delight of the Father muſt be made ſin for the ſoul that hath ſinned; conſider this, all the ſins thou haſt committed, if ever they be pardoned, they muſt be by vertue of the Covenant between God the Father and the Son: all thy ſins muſt be tranſmitted on Chriſt, all thy oaths, drunkenneſs, and wickedneſs muſt be put upon him, and he muſt ſtand charged with them all: Oh you that are ſo laviſh in ſin, and take ſuch liberty to do wickedly; I ſay, if ever thy ſin be pardoned, it muſt be laid on his ſhoulders, run on as faſt as thou wilt, if ever thou be'ſt ſaved, at the beſt, yet thy ſin muſt be ſet on him, and charg'd upon his ſcore. I remember that expreſſion of *Nathan* to *David*, 2 Sam. 12. 13. *The Lord hath put away thy ſin*, the words are to be read out of the Original, *The Lord hath made thy ſin to paſs over*, to paſs over from thee unto his Son, he hath laid them to his charge. This is the ſecond myſterie in point of Juſtification, thou a poor ſoul ſtandeſt charged with thy ſin, and art in danger of eternal damnation, rather than thou ſhouldſt eternally periſh, God is contented to paſs over thy ſins upon his own Son. Now they muſt needs be bleſſed that God does ſo much for, and know thou if ever thy ſin be pardoned, God does do ſo much for thee.

Of the third Myſterie, It is by Chriſts Sufferings.

5. Where ever ſin is pardoned, Chriſt ſtands charged not only with the ſin, but to ſuffer as much puniſhment for thy ſin

as if thou wert eternally damned for them; it is not ſuch a pardon, as that there is no puniſhment to be ſuffered, but whoſoevers ſins are pardoned, there is this agreement between God the Father and the Son, that his own Son ſhall ſuffer as much puniſhment, as if thou ſhouldſt ſuffer eternally the wrath of God for thy ſin, there is this done for thee; and ſurely that man is a bleſſed man for whom Chriſt is content to ſuffer ſo much as thy ſins come to, or elſe thou muſt have been eternally damned, this Religion and the Goſpel teaches us, that we can never come to be pardoned by any other way.

Of the fourth Myſterie, Where Sin is pardoned, the Soul ſtands righteous before God.

4. There is this myſterie in it; Where ever ſin is pardoned, God does not only paſs by ſin and forgive it, but he makes the ſoul ſtand righteous before him; every juſtified man ſtands righteous before the Lord. A malefactor may come to a Prince, and be forgiven his fault, and yet not accounted a righteous man, he may be lookt upon as a wicked wretch ſtill, though out of free grace the Prince forgive him: But God never forgives the offence of any one ſin, but that man is ſet righteous before the Lord, this is done by an Act of Juſtification; I ſpeak not of Sanctification: A Prince may forgive a Traytor, but the Law is not ſatisfied; but God when he forgives ſin, takes ſuch a courſe as that the offence is not only forgiven, but the Law comes to be ſatisfied, and the ſoul ſtands before God as a righteous perſon; and ſurely he that is righteous muſt needs be bleſſed.

Of the fifth Myſterie, This Righteouſneſs is in another.

5. This Righteouſneſs is in another, and it is a higher righteouſneſs than ever that of *Adam*'s was in Innocency; this is a great myſterie, that a ſoul ſhould ſtand righteous before the Lord, and yet in the righteouſneſs of another, not of his own, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9, 10. St. *Paul* counted his own righteouſneſs as dung that he might be found in him, that is in Chriſt, *Not having my own Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, but that which is through*

the

the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God that comes in by faith; and so *Rom.* 5. latter end, Christ is said to be *our righteousness*, v. 19. *As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous*; 'tis a rigteousness transferr'd upon us beyond our own: Mark, in forgiveness, as our sins come to be transferr'd and put upon Christ, so the righteousness of Christ is transferr'd upon a justified soul, and that soul comes to be righteous before God: surely then, blessed is that man that comes to have the shining garments of Christs righteousness upon him: *Ahasuerus* could not think of a better way than this to honour *Mordecai* more, than to clothe him with the Kings Royal Rayment, and proclaim before him, *This shall be done to the man whom the King delights to honour*; surely that man or woman is honour'd indeed, that God would clothe with the shining Robes of the righteousness of his own Son; thou that wast clothed with the filthy rags of thy own sin and wickedness, and hadst no other garments to stand in, in the presence of God; now he puts on thee the Righteousness of his own Son, and so thy iniquity comes to be covered: Oh that is a glorious Garment! all the Garments in the world bedeck with Diamonds are but filthy Garments in comparison of the Garments of Christs Righteousness, that is put upon a man when his sins are forgiven.

Of the sixth Mysterie, A near Union is made between Christ and the Soul.

6. When God comes to forgive sin, the way God takes is this, he brings a man into such a near Union with his own Son as makes thee to be one with him; yea, so to be one with Christ as no two things in the world are joyn'd so together, as thou and Christ are, the soul God pardons, he does it this way, 'tis not, thou hast sinn'd and I will pardon thee, 'tis no such slight business, as I may say, in a sinners pardon: No, for when God forgives thee, he makes thee one with his own Son, so as no two things in the world are so near together as thou and Christ; therefore the Scripture expresses it by the Union of Branch and Root, Body and Members, that is a near Union of bones and flesh in one

body: ſo alſo the Union between Man and Wife is a near Union, but the Union between Chriſt and a juſtified Soul is nearer than any of theſe: there is one expreſſion in Scripture that Chriſt uſeth, John 14. 20. *You in me, and I in you*: there are no two things ſo nearly united, though the members be in the body, the body is not in the members; ſo the branch, though it be in the root, the root cannot be in the branch; but the Union between Chriſt and us, *Is Chriſt in us, and we in him; He that is joyned to the Lord in one Spirit:* It is a ſpiritual Union, and the Union of ſpiritual things is the neareſt that can be: Now, Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſins are forgiven, becauſe by this means, God brings the Soul and Chriſt to ſuch a near Union, that all natural Unions are but dark ſhadows of it.

Of the ſeventh Myſterie, It is by Faith, yet boaſting excluded.

7. *It muſt be by Faith*, and that is the moſt glorious work that ever God enabled a poor creature to do, yet boaſting muſt be excluded, the Scripture excludes boaſting from both, not only from the Law of works, but the Law of faith; but you may ſay, How can both be excluded both the Law of works and the Law of faith? for works they may be excluded ſay ſome, becauſe works are our own, but faith is the gift of God; God inables us to believe, therefore there can be no boaſting of faith becauſe it is the gift of God, but works are our own; this anſwer is but a fiction, for if we be inabled for the performance of any work, that is of God too; the work of any grace is the gift of God as really and truly as faith is the gift of God, all gracious works are performed by the grace and gift of God. *Adam* could not do what he did in Innocency, but by the gift of God; and therefore to ſay boaſting is excluded by faith, becauſe faith is the gift of God, will not ſerve the turn; therefore the myſterie of Juſtification is a great myſterie, that notwithſtanding faith is ſuch a glorious work, as it is one of the glorioueſt works that ever any creature did, yet that this ſhould be excluded, by this I cannot but be perſwaded, that there is more in the work of Faith than in any thing *Adam* ever had; and that faith the power of believing was not in *Adam* in the ſtate

of

or Innocency: Why? Because it is now made such a grace as excludes all kind of boasting: For were it but the stirring up of any power we had in *Adam*, it would no more exclude boasting, than if God stirred up any other grace, as Love, Hope, Fear, and the like: But that it excludes boasting, this may be the most satisfactory answer; Works they could not exclude boasting; Why, though they were from the grace and gift of God, yet they belonged to mans nature; for if God will make a rational creature, he must give it those perfections that are due to that nature: Now the Image of God was in some regard due to such a nature. But now, God when he comes to give faith, he gives a higher thing than ever was due to the nature of man; hence there is a greater mysterie in faith than in any other grace; and therefore it is a great mysterie that God should justifie a man by faith, and yet this excludes boasting more than any other thing.

Object. *I, but the Scripture sayes, God imputes faith for righteousness; and when God inables us to believe, Is it not our own?*

Answ. Yes, when we have it, it is our own; and when we are justified, it is imputed to us for righteousness; but mark what I shall say, it will be useful for the understanding that Text in *Rom.* 4. 22. *Where*, it sayes, *faith was imputed to him for righteousness*; ye must not understand it thus, that is, that God did through the grace of Christ *now* accept of *Abraham's* faith as his righteousness, whereby he should stand to be justified by it in the sight of God; he did not thus accept of faith for righteousness; no, not through the mediation of Christ, nor by vertue of any Covenant made by God with Christ: God did never make any Covenant with Christ, that whereas man did owe obedience to all the Law, and that should have been his righteousness had he continued in it, but man now being unable to perform it, that God would be now so favourable to him as that he would accept of faith for righteousness, that is not the meaning of it; for the word in the Original translated *for righteousness*, it is thus, it was *imputed unto righteousness*; it is the same word used in Rom. 10. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*: Now Confession with the mouth is not made Salvation it self, but unto Salvation;

tion; so faith is not the righteousness it self, but unto righteous-
Object. ness, that is, by faith we come to get righteousness: *But why*
sayes the Scripture God imputed it unto righteousness? I take it
Answ. thus, that forasmuch as faith is so glorious a Principle (infused of God) above any thing of our own, God is pleased to account of it as if it were our own, and so imputes it unto righteousness; the truth is, it is not our own; no, not so our own as other graces are our own: but God in point of Justification is pleased to impute it as our own, that we may come to have righteousness by it, as if it were our own: Now this is a great mystery, that God in the work of pardon of sin, should do it by the grace of faith, and that this excludes all boasting, and yet righteousness imputed to it as if it were our own. Hence by the way, let us take heed of the Opinion of those that say, *faith it self is imputed for righteousness*, and that God through Christ accepts of faith as the matter of our righteousness: The Papists say we are justified by works, and that God is pleased through Christ to accept not of Faith only, but of Humility, Fear, Love, Repentance, Joy, &c. though they be imperfect, yet he is pleased to accept of these for our righteousness; sayes the other opinion, faith is our righteousness, though God might require exact obedience to the whole Law, yet he is pleased to accept of faith; both these Opinions are besides the truth, and therefore there is the same danger in the one as in the other, and therefore both to be avoided.

Of the eighth Mysterie, God is infinitely Just, and yet infinitely Merciful.

8. The eighth particular is this, that shews pardon of sin is a great mysterie, because *where ever God pardons sin, he is infinitely just, and yet infinitely merciful*, there is an admirable reconciliation, between Gods Justice and Mercy, which shews it to be a great mysterie: There are three great mysteries in Religion, 1. The great mysterie of the Trinity, that there should be divers Persons, and yet but one God. The second is, that in the Person of Christ there should be two Natures, and yet but one Person. And then the third is, the reconciliation of the mercy

and justice of God in the forgiveness of a sinner. Many people when they seek for pardon of sin, they only think of Gods infinite grace and mercy, but not of his justice: But certainly, who ever he be that comes to be pardoned, God shews himself infinitely just as well as merciful; that he is merciful, that is clear to every one: But how does it appear he is so infinitely just? for that there is a clear Text for it, Rom. 3. 26. *To declare at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*; so that God in the justifying of him that believes in Christ, is just as well as merciful.

Now then poor sinner, lay these together, that God should work so strangely in bringing about the pardon of thy sin in such a mysterious way as this is; certainly it does demonstrate that thou art a blessed man; I beseech you think of what hath been said, and lay it in your breasts; go away with this upon your spirits, Lord, I indeed heard much of the evil of sin, and that it was a greater evil than ever I thought it to be, and now I have begun to hear of the mighty work of God in pardon of sin, I hope I shall for ever retain higher thoughts of it than before. Brethren, there is nothing in the world that people have slighter thoughts of, than of the pardon and forgiveness of sin, they think it a slight matter. But if there were any work that ever took up the heart of God from all eternity, and shews God to be a God, it is this about the pardon of sin; this is a great doctrine, the doctrine of the work of God in the justification of a sinner, 'tis one of the greatest Doctrines in Divinity, and therefore that you might sanctifie the Name of God in it, and give him that glory that is due in this great work, it is needful to search, that we may find out what is the work of God in it.

Of the ninth Mysterie, When God forgives sin, for the present, he forgives all to come.

9. The ninth Mysterie is this, and this may seem one of the strangest of all, *When God forgives a sinner, any one sin for the present, he likewise forgives him all the sins that ever he shall com-*

mit afterward; this is a mighty mysterie, for God when he takes a poor soul and forgives him his sin, he does not only forgive him his present and past sins, but layes in a pardon for all the sins that ever shall be committed by him afterwards; this is a way of pardoning sin proper to God alone; there is no creature pardons the offence one of another, so as God pardons here; therefore the Prophet cryes out, Micah 7.18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage?* Who is a God like to thee; who in all the world can pardon sin as God doth? No Father pardons the sin of a Child, no Prince the sin of a Subject as God doth: Now, because this is a point of admirable comfort to all the Saints of God, 'tis fit to be opened and made out, that when God pardons sin at first, he gives in a pardon for all they shall commit afterwards; I manifest it thus, in *Rom.* 8. 1. the Apostle says, *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*: from whence I argue, Except God did pardon what soever sins should be committed when he justifies a sinner, then at any time when a justified person sins, until he renew an act of faith for pardon, there must be condemnation to him; for whosoever is in such an estate as hath any sin unpardoned, for that instant he is in the state of condemnation: But there is no instant of time, when it can be said of any justified person, that he is in the state of condemnation; I say no instant of time, for though a justified person may fall into sin after he is justified, yet at that instant when he falls into that sin, there is by God applyed a pardon, that was laid in before, although an act of faith be not renewed in regard of that particular sin; that is the point I would make good, though it be true, there is required as our duty an act of faith to lay hold on our pardon; yea, also it is required in respect of comfort too; for we cannot have comfort of the pardon of a new sin committed, except there be a renewal of an act of faith; But yet this renewal of an act of faith, though it be necessary, because commanded, and for our comfort, yet no absolute necessity to free us from condemnation; but being once justified by Christ, there is a pardon laid up, so that upon any act of sin newly committed, this pardon is applyed by God himself, though we be not able

by the renewal of a present act of faith, to sue out pardon anew unto our selves. Nay, the truth is, if this were not so, there could be no instant of time, wherein a believer was not in the state of condemnation; for there is no instant of time wherein a believer doth not some way or other sin against God: Further it is apparent and undenyable, that there is not a necessity of renewing an act of faith upon every sin committed for the pardon of it, this Argument cannot be denyed, because otherwise, there must be a necessity of renewing an act of faith after the last act a believer doth; for in the last action a believer doth in this world, there is some sin in it: Now if there be some sin in the last act of all, then there cannot be of necessity required another act, for the applying of the pardon of that sin a believer did do in the very last act he did in this world: those that hold a believer cannot finally fall away, yet say, he may totally; many hold that if once a man be justified, he can never go to Hell, but yet this they hold; that he may so sin that he may be brought into a state of condemnation; he may be brought into such a state, that if he should dye at that present he should perish, but say they, God doth take care that he shall not dye, till there be a renewing of an act of faith for pardon: I answer, there is nothing in Scripture to prove, there is not any instant of time wherein a believer may not dye; and yet if he do dye, he must then perish, because an act of faith was not renewed; true say they further, that all sins bring not into the state of condemnation; there may be pardon of course for sins of infirmity, but other sins that waste a mans Conscience, there a believer is brought into the state of condemnation, till there be a new act of faith renewed for pardon. I answer, If any one sin bring a believer into the state of condemnation after Conversion, where shall we put the limits, as to say, if you go but thus far, you are not in a state of condemnation, but if you go a little further, you are; God puts no such limits in Scripture, but all sin in its own nature brings into a state of condemnation, and yet no sin brings a believer into the state of condemnation; therefore this is a great mysterie of God in the pardoning of sin; when God pardons the sin of a believer, he does not only pardon what he hath done at present, but for what he shall do, he

layes in a pardon, and Christ hath purchas'd it for us, for all sins yet to come: 'tis like a Son running into arrears, his Father comes and payes his debts; but because he sees his Son will run further into arrears, he layes in so much as will pay all for time to come, that if he run into arrears he shall not be cast into Prison: just so it is with God, God pardons all our sins at first and then he layes up a Pardon, that if we run into arrears we shall not lye in Prison to be condemned and suffer for them. This is a great mysterie, and they that teach otherwise rob the people of God of abundance of comfort that otherwise they might have, were this Truth made clearly known unto them.

Object. *Is not this Doctrine a Doctrine of Liberty, If they have knowledge that God when he pardons for what sins are past, and layes in a Pardon for what sins are yet to come; May not People hence take liberty to sin? May not they say, that though they do sin, yet there is a Pardon laid in before hand for them?*

Answ. Here thou speakest as one that understands not the grace of the Gospel that thus objectest, it is another manner of thing than thou art aware of; there is not that malignity in the grace of the Gospel to cause such effects in the hearts of believers. *Luther* compares sin to Lime, and the Law to Water, that makes the Lime hotter; but the grace of the Gospel sayes he is like to Oyl, and Oyl will quench Lime, but Water will not; so the Oyl of the Gospel will quench the sins of men; and certainly the more there is of the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, the more the lusts remaining in the heart of a believer come to be quenched; this is an evident Argument of the great difference between the mercy of God revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith; and that which is received only in a natural way: you that are unbelievers, and receive the Gospel only in a natural way, your lusts may be nourished, and you may take liberty for wickedness: But if once you come to receive the mercy of God in and through Christ Jesus, then that mercy will be the greatest opposer of thy lusts and sin, as any thing can be in the world; certainly, thou knowest not the work of God in Christ forgiving sin, that reasonest thus; I shall shew you plainly, The knowledge of the great work of the Propitiation by Christ, brings the soul into a hatred of all sin, and is no encou-

riſher of it, 1 *John* 1. 9. the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the wonderful grace of God in Chriſt to us; *If we confeſs our ſins, he is not only ready to forgive, but to cleanſe us from them.* And Chap. 2. 1. *My little children, I write unto you that you ſin not*, that you take not liberty in any ſin. They might ſay, you write theſe things that we ſin not; but we have ſinful natures, and ſo ſhall certainly fall into ſin for all this: Well, for the comfort of Saints, *If any man ſin*, ſayes he, *we have an Advocate with the Father*: Jeſus Chriſt is preſently an Advocate though you ſin through ignorance and negligence, and do not renew preſent acts of faith to ſue out a pardon: yet ſayes the Holy Ghoſt, *Jeſus Chriſt is an Advocate with the Father*, the Lord Chriſt ſtands before the Father pleading, that no evil may befall you for your ſin; this is the admirable priviledge of the Saints of God, a moſt bleſſed priviledge they have by the Covenant of Grace, that when they commit a ſin, and may be take no notice, and may be Conſcience is ſo benum'd at preſent, that they go not to God to ſeek a pardon, but may be lye in ſin a long time together, yet ſayes the Text, *you have one that pleads your cauſe*: and it is from hence, that Gods wrath comes not out againſt you; becauſe *you have an Advocate with the Father*: Well ſayes the ſecond verſe, *And he is the Propitiation not only for our ſins, but the ſins of the whole world*; he means believers: Now in *ver.* 3. ſayes he, *Hereby we know that we know him, If we keep his Commandments*; as if he had ſaid, If we do not take heed of ſin and keep his Commandments, we know not this grace of pardon; if any that hear us Miniſters teach this Doctrine, and ſay they know him, and have no care to keep Gods Commandments, 'tis quite contrary to what the Apoſtle ſayes, he ſays, *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments*, this knowing of him, as it is a means to keep his Commandments, ſo 'tis an argument we do know him when we do keep his Commandments: v. 4. *He that ſayes I know him*, that is, Chriſt, to be a Propitiation and an Advocate, *and keeps not his Commandments is a lyar, and the truth is not in him*; That man that reaſons thus, and ſayes, Well, I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and I know my ſins are pardoned through faith in him; yea, and all the ſins that ſhall be committed, a pardon is laid in for them, and I

ſhall

shall never enter into condemnation: Dost thou say so, and yet keepest not Gods Commandments? Hast not thou the Conscience, and the rather upon the knowledge of this, to keep Gods Commandments? the Holy Ghost saies, *Thou art a lyar, and there is no truth in thee*; and thou wert never acquainted with this mysterie of godliness. When it is understood in a natural way, men may abuse it; you may know what I mean by a natural way, and God knows you have need of Information; by a natural way I mean by the light of Natural Reason, and all other helps of learning on this side the work of the Holy Ghost: but when men understand it by a powerful work of the Holy Ghost, they that know it thus, this knowledge will make them more careful and conscionable to keep Gods Commandments; and if any man say he knows it thus, and does not keep Gods Commandments, *he is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.*

Further, If a man should reason thus; Well, if there be such a mysterie in pardon of sin, and that God when he pardons sin at first, layes in a pardon for all sin afterward, this will make way for more sin: Take notice here, of the infinite perverseness of the heart of man; suppose it were not thus, but the contrary were true, that God indeed pardoned the sins of a believer coming to him; but if ever he sin after pardon, let him look to it, he shall then be under the sentence of death and condemnation; upon this a mans heart would not be more ingaged to seek after Christ, but would reason thus; Well, I may labour and take pains, and suffer much to get a comfortable assurance of the pardon of sin; but what of all this, the next day, the next hour I may sin again, and be in the same case I was before, so that which way soever things go, men will reason against God for their lusts; I shall put it to you, or to any heart that may be supposed to have attended on God, yea, and hath received grace; Which of these Doctrines ingage the heart most for God? either this Doctrine, or the other; whether that you believing that God will pardon sin; yet if you fall into any new sin, you are under a sentence of condemnation; or thus, that God is so gracious, that he not only pardons sin for present, but for your incouragement he so pardons it, that though you through infirmity fall again into sin, he will not cut off his kind-

kindness from you; Which of these is the greater incouragement? certainly to a slavish spirit the one may be more than the other: But to a spirit that may be supposed to have any ingenuity in it, the later words must needs far more ingage him to walk with God all his days. What, is Gods grace so free? that he should have such pitty on poor creatures, not only at their first coming in, and casting themselves on Christ, as to pardon all their sins, though they be never so many and great? but also such a Covenant upon my coming in, that God will discharge all sins that shall be committed for time to come, though I be ready to fall into sin daily, yet I shall not come into condemnation? O what will so infinitely ingage a gracious and ingenuous spirit as this does! surely nothing like this. Now if this be true, that man that is forgiven, is thus forgiven; not only for time past, but also for time to come: Then *blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose iniquities are pardoned.*

Of the tenth Mysterie, God pardons a sinner, not because he is, but that he might be changed.

10. *The tenth Mysterie is this,* (for I would endeavour to shew you what a mighty work Pardon of Sin is, and raise up your hearts to have higher thoughts of it than ever you had before) *God does not pardon because a sinner hath his heart and nature changed, but that he might be changed.* And thus the pardons of God differ from all other pardons; a Prince pardons a Malefactor, or a Father a Child: but upon what terms? a Prince expects his Subject should be changed as far as he can discern; and a Father, (though never so tender) will not pardon a Child, unless he come in and manifest a change of his disobedient spirit, and then he pardons. God doth not pardon because we are changed; but that we might be changed: his Pardon comes first, *Rom.*4.5. a very strange place for this, and may incourage any poor soul that is troubled for sin, to come in and lay hold upon Gods mercy in Christ; *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.* Mark, when God comes to justifie a sin-

ner, he looks upon him as ungodly; he ſtayes not till the ſinner be made godly and then juſtifies him, as a Prince ſtayes till a Malefactors heart be changed, and he become a loyal ſubject, and then pardons him: God is not ſo in juſtifying ſouls, he *juſtifies the ungodly*; one that is ungodly coming to him, he juſtifies. This is a mighty Argument, I name it for this end; becauſe I would teach people, that notwithſtanding any ſin or guilt that lyes upon their ſpirits, yet they have a liberty to come in and lay hold upon Chriſt for Juſtification; do not ſay, I am ungodly, I am a great ſinner, and have a vile heart, and I find not my nature changed; and therefore, How dare I lay hold upon Gods grace for mercy and pardon? yea, thou mayeſt, becauſe *God juſtifies the ungodly*; though thy nature be not changed and ſanctified, as thou ſayeſt: take it thus, Thou muſt lay hold of Gods grace for Juſtification that thou mayeſt be ſanctified; not only pardoned, but ſanctified: Come but thus with thy heart affected to cloſe with the grace of God, that thou mayeſt be ſanctified as well as pardoned; though for the preſent thou feeleſt not any Sanctification, yet thou mayeſt have right to lay hold upon Chriſt as well as any one whatſoever.

Object. *Will not this be preſumption for a ſinner thus to lay hold on Chriſt?*

Anſw. If faith were meerly a perſwaſion that Chriſt dyed for them, or as many men think; thus, (Well, God is merciful, and he will pardon me, Chriſt having dyed;) there may be preſumption in laying hold on Chriſt: But now as Juſtification is a great myſterie, ſo is faith; and faith is a mighty work of the Spirit of God in the ſoul, that cauſes the ſoul to rouſ and caſt it ſelf on the free grace of God in Chriſt, and venture it ſelf and all its hopes for good and happineſs on him; there is not only a coming to Chriſt for pardon, but for grace, holineſs, light, good and happineſs here, and for whatever it doth expect hereafter; it looks for all from him. Now when there is ſuch a work of God upon the ſoul, in caſting it ſelf on God in Chriſt, though there be nothing at preſent but ungodlineſs, in him appearing, yet ſuch a one may and hath right to come unto God for pardon; for God juſtifies the ungodly, Rom. 5. 6. *Chriſt dyed for the ungodly*; and ver. 10. *If when we were Enemies, we were reconciled*

conciled by the death of his Son; when we were Enemies, and had baſe hearts full of enmity againſt God, yet then Chriſt dyed to reconcile us unto God: thou mayeſt then venture to come to him for pardon, and it is no preſumption, though thou ſeeſt no change in thy ſelf, yet he pardons that thou mayeſt be changed; now here is a glorious work of God in pardoning a ſinner, that God ſhould pardon, juſtifie, and reconcile us when we were Enemies to him; here is a glorious work of God for a ſinner to be juſtified and reconciled, and yet when the ſinner was an Enemy unto him.

Of the eleventh Myſterie, God himſelf purchaſes the Pardon.

11. *When God pardons a ſinner, he himſelf is fain to purchaſe the pardon*, and this is different from the manner of pardons among men: A Prince pardons a malefactor, but the Prince himſelf doth not purchaſe the pardon; and if one have offended you, you pardon the offender: but you that are offended do not purchaſe a pardon for the offender; poſſible ſome friend may come and purchaſe a pardon at the Kings hands for an offender, but the King himſelf doth not purchaſe it: yet thus it is with God: God doth not pardon any one ſin, but it coſts God himſelf dear before he gets it; therefore it is not ſuch a ſlight thing to be pardoned; you muſt not think to go to God and cry mercy, and that he will pardon you; thus in a natural way God never pardons ſin: but it coſts God dear, yea, that which is more worth than all the world; if that could have done it, God would rather have diſſolved Heaven and Earth, than have given that that he did give; What was that? It was the blood of his own Son: God gave him up to death for the ſin of mankind, and for the purchaſing a pardon for man: But ſome may ſay, *What need God have purchaſt a pardon for man? Could he not have forgiven him by his abſolute Prerogative?* I anſwer, there was need, becauſe of the ſatisfaction of Juſtice, he did purchaſe it out of the hands of Juſtice; God was fain to lay down a price to Juſtice, before he himſelf could pardon one ſin; Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied before he could give out one pardon: Well, take all theſe together; Chriſt muſt be our Surety, take the debt

upon himſelf, and ſuffer as much puniſhment as we ſhould have done in Hell to all eternity; and to make the ſoul ſtand righteous before God, yet this righteouſneſs to be in another; yea, a near union is made between Chriſt and the Soul: And yet further, it is by faith, and yet boaſting is excluded; and God is infinitely merciful, and yet infinitely juſt; and when he pardons one ſin, he layes in a pardon for all ſin for time to come, juſtifies the ungodly, pardons ſin, yet purchaſes the pardon: Theſe eleven Meditations about the Pardon of Sin make it appear to be a wonderful work of God; put theſe together, and then the reſult according to the point will be clear and full; that, *Bleſſed is that man whoſe ſins are forgiven:* And ſurely if there be ſuch a myſterious and glorious work of God in pardoning ſin; that man for whom God ſhall work ſuch a glorious work is a bleſſed man indeed. And now having done with this Argument of the great myſterie of Godlineſs in forgiveneſs of Sin; I proceed to another, and it is this:

CHAP. IV.

That Pardon of Sin not only is a Mercy in it ſelf, but the Foundation of many other Mercies.

4. *Argument.* PArdon of Sin makes a man bleſſed; Why? *Becauſe it is the Foundation of abundance of other Mercies*; it is an inlet to many other mercies, therefore a great mercy; it is a *leading* mercy, it is as *the Queen of* Mercy, that hath a great and glorious train of other mercies attending on her; indeed, it is the very foundation of all the mercies of the Covenant of grace, it is the principal mercy, and the very foundation of all the mercies that are in the Covenant, and the inlet and opening to them all; the Covenant of Grace is a rich Treaſury, hath abundant ſtore of mercy in it, and this opens to them all: The current of all Gods mercies was ſtopt by mans ſin; though God had an infinite Ocean of mercy, yet the ſource and vent of all Gods mercies was ſtopt. Now, when God pardons ſin, he takes away the ſtop, and opens the ſluce, that his infinite grace and goodneſs

goodneſs may flow forth plentifully and ſweetly to the ſoul, body and ſtate, yea, to all that belongs to a believer: You may conceive Gods mercy to be as an infinite ſtream of goodneſs, running with a full current towards his creatures; for God delights in the Communication of himſelf to his creatures: But now mans ſin made a dam, and ſtopt the pipe, that not one drop of mercy could come forth, not a drop of all that mercy that in the eternal purpoſe of God he hath appointed in time ſhall come forth to ſuch and ſuch a poor creature; but when he comes to Pardon and Juſtification, he pulls out the plug, and pulls up the flood-gates and ſluces, and then mercies come flowing in amain; when ſin is pardoned, then the full ſtreams of all the mercies in the Covenant of grace come flowing into the ſoul. Well then, if it be thus, that pardon of ſin is an inlet to other mercies; then he that hath his ſin pardoned is a very bleſſed man. I ſhall open this, That Pardon of Sin is the foundation to, and opens the ſluce to let in all other mercies, Jer. 31. 31. *Behold, the dayes come that I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael, *and the houſe of* Judah: here God opens his goodneſs, and tells them he will make a new Covenant, not like that he made with their fathers, verſe 32. *But this ſhall be the Covenant*, verſe 33. and he inſtances in ſome particulars, *I will put my Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother; ſaying, know the Lord, for they ſhall all know me*, &c. But what is the foundation of all this? at the end of the 34. *For I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their ſin no more. I will make a new Covenant with them, and put my Law into their inward parts, and they ſhall all know me*; I will come in with all my mercies and bleſſings, Illumination and Sanctification; he mentions theſe inſtead of the reſt, as in a grant of great things ſome particulars are mentioned; but then he comes in with a general; *For I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their ſin no more:* As if it ſhould be ſaid, Why, Lord wilt thou come in thus to thy people in ſuch an abundant way of mercy more than formerly, and let in theſe graces of thy Covenant? Why? here is the ground of all; *for I will forgive their iniquity*; ſo that forgiveneſs of iniquity is the ſpecial

inlet of the mercies of the Covenant. Now more particularly I shall shew you what are those special mercies, Pardon of sin is an inlet to, and that will further shew the blessedness of those souls that have their sins pardoned, because pardon of sin is an inlet to many other mercies. As,

Of Peace with God, that Pardon of Sin is an inlet to.

1. Peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. *being justified*, that is, pardoned *through faith*; what follows, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*; the ground of our Justification and Reconciliation, it is not our Humiliation, no nor our Sanctification: Observe it, the very bottom and foundation of our Justification and Reconciliation, it is neither of these, (though we ought to be in the use and exercise of them) but pardon of sin is through the free grace of God applyed by faith; this is the ground of all our Peace and Reconciliation with God: And thus men and women should seek their peace with God; the main thing they should lay the weight of obtaining peace of God upon, it is the work of faith applying the Righteousness of Christ for pardon, rather than any work of Humiliation or Sanctification by the Spirit of God; yet both these are sweet and comfortable, when we sound the bottom and main foundation of all our peace on the free grace of God pardoning our sin, and justifying of us through faith in Christ; God does not say, you that are great sinners, stay till you are humbled and are brought to hate sin, and you shall have peace with God: No, you may be much troubled for sin, and may leave it, and reform in many things, and live better lives than before, and yet your peace not made up with God: How then shall it be? thus, being justified by faith, looking up to the free grace of God in Christ for pardon of sin, we come to have peace with God, and this is a great privilege: but if you consider on the other side, a creature not reconciled, cannot look upon the infinite Creator without terror and shakings, and tremblings of spirit, he cannot have any thoughts of God, but he thinks of him as his Enemy: and that all the excellencies of God are working misery and ruine to him, this is a sad thing: But when pardon of

sin

ſin comes, God is reconciled, and all fears and terrors from the Almighty are gone: thoſe fears whereby the ſoul was afraid God was ſecretly working ruine to it, are diſpelled; and if any judgement of God come cloſe and near, and befall any in the ſight and hearing of a guilty ſoul, he would be thinking God is coming to me next: But a juſtified ſoul may ſay, though the judgements of God be never ſo terrible in the world, and in the Word, which before terrified my Conſcience: yet now my ſin being pardoned, my ſoul is reconciled, and the Word of God ſpeaks nothing but good unto me, and all thoſe fears that before ſo terrified me are diſpelled.

But may not a pardoned man have theſe fears, or ſomewhat of the nature of them reſting on his ſpirit after he is pardoned? Object.

Yea, he may, but the ground of them is diſpelled and gone; it is not the work of Gods Spirit that cauſes theſe fears, as it did before, Rom. 8. 15. *You have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry Abba Father*; may be you may have ſome fears, but being juſtified by faith, you have not again received the ſpirit of bondage; if hereafter you have any fears of Gods judgements and wrath againſt you; it is not the ſpirit of bondage, the Spirit of God that cauſes theſe fears, your own ſelves may miſtake the matter; for thoſe that once receive the ſpirit of bondage, never after receive it; you may have fears through your own miſtakes, but not by the Spirit of God, as the ſpirit of bondage ſhewing us our bondage by our ſins, and working terrors on the ſoul for it, theſe fears are diſpelled; for in our peace with God in the pardon of ſin, the matter of enmity between God and the ſoul is taken away; there is this in it which might have been added in the myſteries: When a Prince pardons a malefactor, he gives him his life, and he is glad, goes away, but the Prince regards him not any more; and poſſibly he may yet have enmity in his heart againſt the Prince ſtill: But God when he pardons a ſinner, not only is the enmity taken away, but forthwith that ſoul is brought into the ſtate of infinite friendſhip, he receives the ſoul into his very heart; ſo that there ſhall be a greater and more intimate love and friendſhip between his Majeſty and that Soul, than ever was between the greateſt and deareſt friends in Anſw.

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the world, this is wonderful, and yet this is so; for as when God comes to pardon sin, there is not only taking away the guilt of sin, but the soul is made actually righteous in Justification; so also there is not only a taking away of the enmity between God and the soul that was there before, but he receives the soul into infinite love, and takes him into infinite friendship with himself; Oh the sweetness and blessedness of that mans state whose sins are pardoned: Reconciliation with God follows thereupon, and he takes the soul into his bosome-love. Further upon this there follows two things, *Peace in Conscience, and with the Creatures*; being justified by faith he hath peace with God, and as the immediate consequences thereof, peace in Conscience and with all the Creatures.

1. *Peace in Conscience*, those fears and grating terrors that arose on guilt of Conscience are gone, those dismal accusations of Conscience are stilled; though it is true, a mans Conscience may trouble him after Pardon and Justification, but it is through mistake, the ground of all those troubles of Conscience are gone; it is with trouble of Conscience after pardon of sin as with the Sea, you that are Marriners may see the wind at Sea raising the boisterous waves on high, yet after the wind is quite down it is a great while before they be still and quiet; so in mens souls it is guilt of sin that causes woful disturbances: but when God pardons sin, he comes into the Soul as Christ in the Ship, and bids all be still; and though through our weakness, after the sting and guilt is removed, Conscience is troubled, yet is God pleased to help the weakness of his People sooner or later; not only to pardon sin in the Court of Heaven, but in the Court of Conscience too, and then all fears and troubles are gone; certainly those that know what the burnings, throbbings and ailings of an accusing Conscience means, they know what a blessing it is to have Peace of Conscience, a great blessing to have all well there, because the Soul hath much to do with Conscience, and Conscience hath much to do with God, yea, only to do with God; and if all be well with that which hath so much to do with the Almighty, it is a great blessedness, blessed is the man that is thus pardoned.

2. *There*

2. There follows this alſo, *Peace with the Creatures*; If I ſhould meet with theſe in a full Text, each of them might require a Sermon themſelves, to ſhew the excellency of a quiet Conſcience and peace with the Creatures. But I muſt but touch it here: God is Lord of Hoſts, and all the creatures ſtand armed ready to avenge Gods quarrel, and not only do they ſtand in readineſs, but there is a kind of cry in the creatures to God to make them the Executioners of his wrath; Shall I go and ſtrike this Drunkard ſayes one? and ſhall I ſtrike this Blaſphemer ſayes another? All the creatures in Heaven and earth cry againſt thee every day: But when God pardons thy ſin, all the creatures preſently become thy friends; when the Judge hath quitted a Malefactor, the under-Officers have nothing to do with him; Conſcience and the Creatures they are under-Officers, and when God is at peace they are at peace too; *When* Joab *came and ſtab'd* Abſalom, *the ten young men that were his Armour-bearers did ſo too*; ſo if God come to a ſinner unpardoned, and give him a ſtab, all the Creatures will be ready to ſtab him too; but when God comes and pardons thy ſin, *He makes a league with thee and the ſtones of the field*, as the Scripture ſpeaks; that is the firſt great mercy that flows into the ſoul upon pardon of ſin, and peace with God. 2 Sam. 18. 15. Job 5. 23.

Of Gods Revealing his Secrets to thoſe whom he Pardons.

2. This follows upon pardon of ſin, *God comes in a wonderful gracious way to reveal himſelf to that ſoul*; he comes to reveal his ſecrets to that ſoul he pardons; and pardon of ſin is the very ground of the Revelation of the Secrets and Myſteries of God by the Spirit to that Soul, *Jer.* 31. 33. among other particulars in the New Covenant God promiſeth *they ſhall be all taught of God*, in *Heb.* 8. that Text is quoted ſomething more fully than in the Prophet, ver. 10, 11. *They ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me from the leaſt to the greateſt:* Mark, *For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more:* Pardon of ſin is made the ground of Gods teaching them his Covenant, *They ſhall know*

me from the least to the greatest; you little ones and young ones, if God please to bring you to Christ, and pardon your sin, a glorious light shall come into your souls: God will shew himself in a glorious manner to you, there shall be another manner of light shine into your hearts than ever before; the mysteries of God will be opened to you, and you shall understand more than many of your fathers, who have not had this mercy to be rightly acquainted with the Justification of a sinner; and therefore you young ones, that much desire knowledge, the main thing to be acquainted with, is this great Doctrine of Justification and pardon of sin; as *Luther* said, *Three things, Prayer, Meditation and Temptations make a Divine*; so I say, the right knowledge of Justification makes a Christian, and they that have not a clear knowledge in this point, do but bungle and are extream weak in all other points of Religion; but when once the soul comes to be justified, what a glorious light is let into the soul, as you all know, that have been made partakers of this grace? And you young ones, you may come to have sin pardoned as well as others, and to have the knowledge of the mysteries of God revealed unto you, 1 *Joh.* 2. 12. compared with the 13. *I write unto you little Children, because your sins are forgiven for his Name sake*; even little children, I write to you, your sins are forgiven: oh it is a happy thing for young children to have faith wrought in them, and to have their sins forgiven them betimes! and then in ver. 13. *I write unto you little Children, because you have known the Father*; Oh what an admirable light springs up in the souls of little Children when their sins are pardoned! they come to the knowledge of the Father: and this is the reason why many great and learned men, that are men of excellent understanding in the knowledge of natural things, are not acquainted with the mysteries of godliness, and think but meanly of them; marvel not at it, for the knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, comes in by pardon of sin; when God pardons sin and justifies a soul by faith in Christ, then God opens the Covenant, and all the glorious mysteries of it to such a soul: A Prince reveals not the secrets of State to a Traytor that lyes under bolts and chains; but if a Prince please to pardon him, and knock off his

his bolts and chains, and raise him unto favour, bring him into his Privy Chamber, and open his whole heart and all the mysteries of the Kingdom to him, here is a great change; thus does God to poor sinners that he pardons: A soul that lyes under the guilt of sin, is just for all the world like unto a Malefactor that lyes in a dungeon, that hath bolts and fetters on him; the guilt of sin is like bolts and fetters on thy soul: Well, thou lyest there fast bound; but when God comes in with pardoning mercy, God sends to thee in this dungeon, and knocks off thy bolts by pardon, and not only so, but calls thee into his Privy Chamber, and opens his heart and bosome unto thee, and reveals those things that were kept secret from the beginning of the world: Princes do not always deal so with Malefactors, if they pardon them they think they have done enough for them; they may afterwards go and shift for themselves, they are not called into the Privy Chamber to have the King open his secrets unto them; but it is certainly so to every soul God pardons; he pardons none, but whom he calls into his Privy Chamber, and reveals unto him the great Counsels of his will, and what has been the great thoughts of his heart, for the good of that soul from all eternity; though some souls have more light than others, yet to no soul that is pardoned but God comes in with a great and glorious light; and in respect of the light of Nature, it may be called a glorious light: there is not the weakest and poorest creature in the world that is pardoned, but he understands more of the light of Gods grace and Covenant, than the greatest Doctors or Rabbins in the world; and though he cannot speak or talk so much of these things, yet he dare venture his soul on those thoughts he hath of Gods good will made known unto him in the Covenant; no Rabbin in the world, though he can talk much of these things, yet he dares not venture his soul for the eternal welfare of it and his estate upon God, to do with him as he pleases; but a believing soul dares venture his Name, his Estate, his Life, yea, his eternal life on God, he dares to put them all into his hands, and to such a soul, *God will reveal his Covenant*, Psal. 25. 14. God will grant this mercy, that he will reveal his Covenant, and all the secrets of it shall be made known unto him; you

that complain of dulneſs of underſtanding, you ſay you hear excellent myſteries and do not underſtand them, there is ſurely much in them, I ſee ſome weight and excellency in them to be found out, and I hope God in time will diſcover them unto me, but little I know for the preſent; you take a courſe to get underſtanding by attendance on the outward Ordinances, it is good to uſe all means, as reading and conferring with other Chriſtians, and pray over what you hear; theſe are excellent: But the great and ſpecial means to get ſaving underſtanding in the myſteries of the Goſpel is this; Caſt down your ſouls at the foot-ſtool of God, and cry for pardon of ſin; it may be guilt of ſin is upon thy heart, let that be thy work to get off the guilt of ſin, and cry for Gods juſtifying mercy in Chriſt; guilt being removed, God will let out to thy ſoul the Revelation of his Covenant in a glorious manner, he will reveal his ſecrets to thee, ſo that upon this there is a holy boldneſs a ſinner comes to have in the preſence of God. Suppoſe a Malefactor come to Court under his guilt being not pardoned; alas, he dare ſcarce look in at Court-gate; and when he comes, he keeps in ſome out-room, and dares not ſtir any further than he is called; but take another that is pardoned, he comes in boldly and goes from one room unto another, yea, into the very Preſence-Chamber, and there can open his mind fully to the King, and ſpeak out all his heart; and this is a great difference between one under the guilt of ſin and another that is pardoned; one under the guilt of ſin he dare ſcarce go to Prayer, and thinks God caſts away his perſon and his ſervices, and that nothing is regarded; but when God comes to pardon he calls the poor ſinner that was under trouble before, to come and draw near to him, and ſaith, fear not, open thy mind and heart to me, Lam. 3. 55, 56, 57. *I called upon thy Name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. 57. In the day that I called upon thee thou dreweſt near, and ſaidſt fear not.* Every poor ſoul that is juſtified, may ſay, God knows when I was under the guilt of ſin, I was caſt into the low dungeon, and the chains of guilt were upon me there, but through thy grace thou haſt heard my voyce, hide not thy ear at my breathing, at my cry: thou canſt not cry, yet if thou beeſt one whom God hath received to mercy, thou muſt have confidence that

God

God will hear the voice of thy breathing: as thou comest to Prayer, and canst not tell what to say; mark, canst thou breathe, Gods ear lies open to the breathings of a soul he hath received to mercy: thou camest to me, I was a great way off shaking and trembling, and thou drew'st near to me, and saidst *fear not*, v. 57. so a poor soul under the guilt of sin he stands shaking and trembling; but when God comes to pardon, he sayes to thee fear not, and because thou dar'st not come to him, he comes to thee, and sayes peace be to thee, fear not, *Heb.* 10. 16. the Apostle speaking of the Covenant that God will make, in *v.* 17. sayes, *Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*; and v. 18. *Where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for sin*; in *v.* 19. he infers that now therefore, *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*; and v. 21. *Having an High Priest over the House of God, let us* (v. 22.) *draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*; God having made a new Covenant, and said, *Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more*; *therefore we have boldness*, sayes the Apostle, *to enter into the Holy of Holies*: In the time of the Law under the Jewish Pedagogy none might enter into the Holy of Holies but the High Priest, there was but little access into the Holiest in the time of the Law; but now when the Gospel comes, *Christ having offered up himself a Sacrifice there needs no more Sacrifices, he at once having purged away sin by his own blood, has opened a new and a living way that we may come with boldness now into the Holiest*: so that a believing soul need now not stand a far off shaking, but may come in to the Privy-Chamber, and enter into the Holy of Holies, and draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith: and this comes from sin pardoned: Oh blessed is he that hath his sin pardoned, that has such a priviledge following thereupon, Eph. 3. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Christ being our High Priest we have boldness, *liberty of speech*, so the Original; a great many know not how to pray, and they think all the Prayers of the Saints have nothing in them but a great deal of Non-sense, because they understand not what the work of God is in the hearts of his people; the Saints have by faith in him liberty of speech, there is a blessed freedom a gracious heart hath, being once justified by Christ, to open

his soul unto God, which cannot be done by any other way in the world, to have liberty to pour out our whole souls into his bosome, is from faith, and comes in as a fruit of Justification, *David pardoned* Absalom, *but would not let him see his face:* but God never pardons any soul, but he gives free liberty for that soul, to come into his presence and open it self fully unto him; this is a second priviledge, *Pardon of sin is an inlet to many other mercies.*

Of Pardon of Sin making all other Mercies to be Mercies.

3. Pardon of sin is not only an inlet to many other mercies, but it is such a mercy *as makes all other mercies to be mercies*, and without which no other mercies would be mercies; by this all other mercies are mercies: when once a soul comes to be pardoned, it may look upon all it hath in a far sweeter way than ever it could before; by this he may look upon House and Land, Wife and Children, Estate and Friends, he may look upon these as mercies indeed; Why? for he has a pardon, his sins are pardoned. As a man supposing he is charged, found guilty, and condemned, having a fair house, rich furniture, sweet yoak-fellow and children, and all things he could desire; but sayes he, What are all these to me seeing I am a condemned man? Well, he goes and gets a pardon unexpectedly, and now he returns to his House, Wife and Relations again, and all are sweet unto him, when he injoyes them with a pardon, he looks upon them with another manner of eye than he did before. Thus there is this difference between the enjoyment of outward comforts in this world when sin is pardoned, and before it was pardoned; thou hast Houses and Land, sweet Yoak-fellow, and Children, trading at Sea and Land, and all things thou canst desire; but what is all this to thee, while guilt of sin lyes grating on thy Conscience? Well, God comes into thee with pardoning mercy, and takes away thy sin, the guilt of which lay corroding on thy Conscience, then thou maist look upon thy Estate, Wife, Children, and all thy comings in to thee, as coming from the same eternal Fountain of Gods eternal love, that Jesus Christ himself came from; this is a mighty Argument to perswade men

to

to seek after the pardon of their sin, that you may have your comforts and enjoyments in this world in outward things sweet unto you; and if there were no other reason to perswade you to seek after forgiveness, this might be enough, that you may have all your outward mercies in mercy to you; you may have an Estate, a sweet Yoke-fellow, and sweet Children, and all thou canst desire, and these are mercies, but they are but such mercies as God may give to those that are Enemies unto him; they are but outward mercies at the best, coming not to thee as fruits of the Covenant, and so are not *the sure mercies of David*; nay, not worthy to be accounted mercies. Consider but two things;

First, *The guilt of sin upon thy soul, is so great an evil, that take all these things at the best, they are but as a grain of Sugar put into a tun of Gall*; a tun filled up with bitter Gall, and one grain of Sugar put into it, would not all the sweetness of it be swallowed up in the tun of Gall? so were the Monarchy of the whole world made over to thee, yet if thy sin be unpardoned, there is so much evil in it, as all that thou canst enjoy is but as one grain of Sugar put into a Tun of Gall, the evil of sin would swallow it all up.

Secondly, *Thou knowest not what thou hast, whether it be out of Gods love or hatred*; Nay, thou hast rather cause to conclude, it is out of Gods anger and hatred, than out of Gods love: How canst thou then account it a mercy, when all the comforts thou hast, may come out of Gods infinite anger and hatred to thee, rather than out of love? therefore till thou art assured of pardon, thou hast no mercy, thou canst be assured of, is in mercy to thee: This shews,

1. *The great vanity of men and women that look after pardon of sin, but 'tis only at such times as God takes away all other comforts from them*; as thus, they think to satisfie themselves with the creatures while they can enjoy them, while they can go up and down amongst friends, eat good chear, and have all coming in; but when God takes away all these, as on a sick-bed, then they will cry for pardon; Oh mercy Lord! oh mercy! I am a wretched miserable sinner, oh mercy! Well, now you would have mercy, Why now, and not before? before you had

had other things, and you quieted your hearts with them; and why not now, were not they mercies? but I know not whether they were out of love or hatred. Well, yet you quieted your hearts with them; and now they are all going, Do you now think it a fit time to cry for mercy? Oh how infinitely wast thou mistaken, that thou didst not cry for mercy before! thou thinkest it now a fit time to cry for mercy; why? thou hadst no mercy that thou couldst take the comfort of as a mercy, unless thy sins were pardoned; and therefore thou hast now cause to cry for pardon: when sickness comes, and God takes away this and the other mercy, thou thinkest thou art left naked; if you knew all, you are naked now: and therefore would you live a comfortable life in this world, and have your House, Estate, and all Relations mercies to you; never be at rest till you have got your sins pardoned and forgiven; this considered, might be a mighty argument and means to draw the hearts of men to get pardon, that all their outward things might be sweetned to them.

2. *If all outward good be not a mercy unless sin be pardoned, then what good wilt thou or any one get by the increase of sin?* thou thinkest it to be a good; Why? all thou hast now is not a good, is not a mercy; and dost thou think to get good by the increase of sin? When a temptation comes to draw thee to sin, think thus, I have heard this day that all I have is not a mercy unless my sin be pardoned, and therefore I can never get any mercy by the increase of sin: Certainly did men and women understand themselves, they would easily answer the Devil by this kind of reasoning.

Of Pardon of Sin making all afflictions easie to be born.

4. *Where ever sin is pardoned, there follows this, that any thing that befals that man or woman is very easie to be born*; an easie matter it is for any one that hath his sin pardoned to bear any affliction, & this is a great blessedness; or rather take it thus, *That either such a one may be assured that afflictions shall be removed, or otherwise made easie to be born*; for pardon of sin delivers us from abundance of afflictions that otherwise might befall us in this world; though it is true, God layes many afflictions on his people

people after their ſins are forgiven, yet it is more than they know, but that if their ſins had not been forgiven they might have had other manner of miſeries than they do now meet withal; perhaps you meet with ſome now, and more than you did before, but for ought you know, thoſe miſeries you meet with now, might have been ſeven-fold more than now they are, and another manner of wrath than you now think of, Iſa. 40. 2. *Cry, her warfare is accompliſhed, for her iniquity is pardoned*; where iniquity is pardoned, there warfare is accompliſhed; if afflictions be not quite removed, yet they are made very eaſie to be born, and that upon *two grounds.*

Firſt, *Becauſe the greatneſs of the good that there is in pardon of ſin, makes the bitterest and saddeſt evil that there is in affliction to be as nothing*; as to inſtance, ſuppoſe a Malefactor that is condemned to ſome grievous and hideous death, ſhould have a friend at Court to ſue for pardon, or he comes up to get pardon: Well, he comes and is admitted to come into the Kings Preſence, and he receives him graciouſly, pardons him freely, quits him fully of all his guilt, and puts him fully out of all the danger he was in; perhaps as he is coming from the King he loſes his Glove or Handkerchief; Would not that be an unſeemly thing for a man, that after he has got his Pardon, yet becauſe he has loſt his Glove, ſhould whine and wring his hands, becauſe of the loſs of his Glove; would not that be an unreaſonable thing? Certainly there is as much unreaſonableſs for any man or woman that hath the pardon of their ſin, for them to wring their hands, and whine, and keep a ſtir as though they were undone becauſe they are afflicted: For the greateſt affliction that can befall any in this world, compared with the good of pardon of ſin, is not ſo much as the loſs of a Glove for the ſaving of any mans life by the Kings Pardon; though your afflictions may be more than the loſs of a Glove; yet your pardon of ſin is greater than any Kings pardon in the world: put theſe together, and know hereby the unreaſonableneſs, and when to check thy ſelf (having any aſſurance of pardon of ſin) that thou ſhouldſt be ſo troubled at any affliction, and have ſo much good from God in the pardon of thy ſin: Further, for thoſe that are troubled at

afflictions, I would put this to them; either they are pardoned, or not pardoned: if ye are pardoned, why are ye so troubled? if ye are not pardoned, then you had need to spend the strength of your spirits by waving your grief for afflictions to seek pardon of your sins.

Secondly, *Pardon of sin will make afflictions easie; because the soul may be assured that the evil of affliction is gone*; he that has his sin pardoned may be assured *that there can nothing befall him in this world, but that if he know all, he himself would be willing with all his heart it should be so*: And is not this a blessed condition for any man, while he lives here in this world, in which there is abundance of evil, yet to be in such a condition as that we shall certainly know, that there shall nothing befall us as long as we live in this world, but that, which if we knew all, we our selves would chuse it, and account it to be a better condition than any other? this is a blessed estate, to be in such a condition as this is, for God to testifie from Heaven unto us, that it shall not be in the power of any creature in the world to do us any hurt; for certainly so it is when once a man or woman is justified, God does as much as speak from Heaven to that poor soul; saying, Soul now you are safe, be certainly assured that there is no creature in all the world can do you any hurt, *Psal.* 116. 7. thou maist say as *David* there, *Return unto thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; God has pardoned thy sin, and delivered thee from death; *and now my soul return unto thy rest*: the word translated *rest* in the Original is plural, return unto thy *rests*; there are rests enough for a soul whom God hath delivered and pardoned, all afflictions to him are but as the Viper on *Paul's* hand that he may shake off, they will do him no hurt; the sting of death is sin, and the sting of afflictions is that they are the beginners of death: but to one that has his sin taken away, the property of affliction is altered; they come not as acts of revenging Justice, but as effects of Love and Mercy: the *Principle* from whence they come, and the *end* to which they tend is differenced from what it was before, when Trespasses are forgiven, Deliverance from Evil will follow after, as it is in the Lords Prayer. True, as you heard before in the former point, If once we come to

have

have afflictions as the fruits of sin, then they are heavy and grievous indeed; in this case when affliction comes for sin, and sin comes to prey upon a man in time of affliction, it is just as a Bailiff set on by a cruel Creditor, that comes to a poor man in debt, and he lye sick; the Bailiff takes away his Stools, Table, Bed and Pillow, and all he hath to help and comfort him, leaves him not a Pillow to rest his weary head upon: so when a sinner lyes sick, and under affliction, guilt of sin comes and takes away all thy comforts; if thou hast any Promise, as a Pillow to rest thy head upon, guilt of sin will take it away; guilt of sin pulls and tears away every comfort, and every good that sinners should have to refresh themselves withal in affliction: But when the guilt of sin is gone, thou maist lay thy head down in quiet, and rest upon a Promise, and it will make affliction very easie, that thou shalt have no cause to make complaint as formerly thou hadst, Isa. 33. ult. *The Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick*; mark the ground of it, *for the People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquity*; when God comes to bestow this great mercy of pardon, the Inhabitants shall not make such dolorous complaints of affliction and trouble upon them: saves *Luther, strike Lord, strike, for I am absolved from my sin*; if once God has absolved thee, or any poor creature from their sin, it is not in the power of any affliction to disturb them, Job 34. 29. *When he gives quietness, who can give trouble? and when he hides his face, who then can behold him?* when God gives quietness, as he doth in forgiveness of sin, then who can make trouble? let there be never so many rumors in the world of war, blood, and miseries; as if Heaven and Earth met together; yet if God give quietness to the heart, in assurance of forgiveness of sin, who can bring trouble? it is not in the power of all the world to disturb his soul whose sins are forgiven; *Pardon of sin is that peace the world cannot take away*; therefore blessed is the man that hath his sins pardoned.

Of Healing, the fruits of Pardoning Mercy.

3. *Where God pardons sin, he heals that soul & sanctifies it by the immediate fruits of the Spirit*; wheresoever it is, and this is a

great blessedness; who is there that understands the evil of sin that sees not this a great blessedness, not only to be delivered from the guilt of sin, but also from the uncleanness of sin too; and that Sanctification or freedom from the power and slavery that there is under the bondage of sin is a fruit of forgiveness of sin will appear by divers Texts of Scripture. I shall not speak to all, but only some that make this blessing to be the consequence or immediate fruits that flow in upon forgiveness, *Jer.* 31. 33, 34. there God promises *to put his law into our inward parts*: But what's the ground of it? in verse 34. *I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more*; the writing of Gods Law in our inward parts, delivering us from the power of sin, and sanctifying our hearts comes in as a fruit of Gods forgiving us our iniquities, Rom. 6. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; why? *because you are not under the Law, but under Grace*: Now this is the great grace of the Gospel, forgiveness of sin, you are under that, and therefore it is that sin cannot have dominion over you; as if the Apostle had said, you may resolve against sin, and do what you can to oppose it, and strive as much as possible you are able to subdue it; yet so long as you remain under the law, sin will certainly have dominion over you, and you will be under the slavery of it, until you come under the grace of the Gospel, and partake of that, Col. 2. 13. *ult. And you hath he quickned together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*; so that quickning and Sanctification is a fruit of forgiving of all their trespasses, 1 Cor. 15. 56, 57. *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God that giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*, the strength of sin is the Law. Gods Justice in the Law giving men up unto sin, there lies the strength of sin. But now God through Christ coming to men in the grace of the Gospel, there comes deliverance from the strength of sin: perhaps some of you have lain under the burden and power of sin, and you have thought the only way to get victory, hath been to resolve and strive against it, and you have done so, and yet you cannot get power over your sins: I remember one writing to *Luther*, tells him, that he had vowed and covenanted against his sin, and yet his sin prevailed against him, until he understood the grace

of

of the Goſpel; and ſo may be have you done, and yet your ſin prevails becauſe you take not this courſe: try the work of faith in point of Juſtification; renew your faith in God, for the forgiveneſs of your ſin through Jeſus Chriſt, that's the ready way, try that courſe; you that have been tired in labouring againſt corruption, you have reſolved and prayed, and ſhed tears, and yet that will not do; try this way, renew your faith daily in point of Juſtification, by laying hold of the infinite riches of the grace of Chriſt in the Goſpel for pardon, for healing power to come in to help you againſt that which holds you, and this will not hinder your duties; you may pray, reſolve, and faſt as much as before, but be ſure your great care be *to renew your faith in point of Juſtification*, and there will come more healing power by that in your ſouls, than by any thing elſe; if once you can touch Chriſt, the bloody iſſues of your ſins that run before come to be dryed up, which you could not dry up, though you ſpent your time and pains, and did all you could do; here is a great difference between Gods forgiveneſs and mans: a King may forgive, but he cannot change and heal: but when God forgives, he heals and takes away that evil diſpoſition from thee that did ſo weaken thee for all good; Chriſt when he comes, he comes *with healing in his wings*; now bleſſed is the man whoſe ſins are forgiven, for that there follows deliverance from the power of ſin, and a healing of the ſoul.

Of comfort againſt Death following on Pardoning Mercy.

6. *Bleſſed is he whoſe ſins are forgiven, becauſe ſuch a man may look in the face of death and judgment with comfort*; Death when he comes to a Natural Man, he comes as a Meſſenger of God to arreſt the Soul at Gods ſuit; but where ſin is forgiven, Death is made a means to bring thee to reſt; that, that would have *arreſted* thee is a means to bring thee to thy *reſt*, Heb. 2. 14, 15. *Chriſt came to die*: Now what was the great buſineſs he came to die for, it was to purchaſe a pardon for ſin, and by his death to take away the power of the Devil, *and deliver them that through fear of death were all their life time ſubject to bondage*; through the fear of death, and nothing in all the world can deliver from

the fear of death but forgiveness of sin, and then *this makes a man look on the day of Judgement with comfort*; for one special end of that day is, that there may be a Declaration of the Infinite Mercy of God in forgiving of sin, Acts 3. 19. *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*; when he shall send Jesus again, which before was preached to you: Certainly assoon as ever a man comes to believe, his sins are blotted out: I but when the times of refreshing shall come, they shall appear to your own selves, and to all the World, Men and Angels more fully than ever before: Some Interpreters think, and I dare not deny it, but that there will be a time of refreshing in this world, before the great and terrible day, that Christ will make it appear that the sins of the Elect Believers are blotted out in another manner than now it doth; but however it will fully appear at that day, and then that day that will be so terrible to the ungodly, will be refreshing to the Saints; Why? because they shall find their sins blotted out then, and that will make that day a refreshing day unto them; *Although the Heavens be all on fire, and shrivelled up like a Scrowl*; and there be dreadful shriekings of ungodly men; yet it shall be a day of refreshing to the Saints, because their sins are blotted out: Oh blessed is the man that hath his sins pardoned now! for he shall have that day to be a day of refreshing to him; but wo be to thee O soul, who ever thou art, that hast not thy sin pardoned; if but one sin stand upon the score not blotted out, wo, wo will betide thee for ever more: but they that find their sin pardoned, shall find that day to be a day of such refreshing as ever they beheld; and therefore blessed is the man that hath his iniquities forgiven.

Of Security against the worlds Reproaches, the fruit of Pardoning Mercy.

7. Where God hath forgiven sin, such a one need not care for the censures of all the world, and the reproaches they cast upon him; the men of the world cast many reproaches on the Saints, and say, they are hypocrites, that though they will not swear, yet they will

will lye; that they are falſe, proud, and the like; Why? now the ſoul that finds it ſelf acquitted before the Lord, need not care for all the cenſures and condemnations that can be caſt upon him from the men of the world, *Rom.* 8. 33. Having ſpoken before of the great grace of God in Juſtification, in *verſ.* 33. he ſpeaks as if he had made a challenge to all the world, let them all come in, let me ſee *Who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect?* Why? *becauſe it is God that juſtifies*: many will charge them of grievous things: I but it is God that juſtifies: What will a man care if the Prince have given him a pardon, though ſome kitchin boy, ſome ſhakeril about the Court ſhould rail againſt him, ſo long as the King had pardoned him; *Bernard* hath a notable ſpeech concerning *David* when *Shimei* railed, *David was not troubled* ſays he, *he did not feel the injury heaped upon him, becauſe he had felt before the grace of God towards him*; the feeling of Gods grace towards him in pardoning, made him not feel the railings of *Shimei*; ſo Chriſt himſelf, *Iſa.* 50. 7. he ſaid before, *I gave my back to the ſmiters, and hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting*; they ſpit upon him: this is apparently ſpoken of Chriſt; but what upheld him? ver. 7. *For the Lord God will help me; therefore ſhall I not be confounded* for all this; *therefore have I ſet my face like a flint* againſt all ſcorns, railings, and accuſations in the world; but what was the bottom of all this? mark, ver. 8. *He is near that juſtifies me, who will contend with me? let us ſtand together: Who is my Adverſary? let him come near to me*; let my Adverſary come and do his worſt, he is near that juſtifies me: true, Chriſt had no ſin perſonally to be pardoned: but he had the ſins of all the Elect charged upon him, and upon that he ſuffered death. Now we are to know, Chriſt is juſtified as well as a Believer; and the very ground why a Believer is juſtified, it is becauſe Chriſt is juſtified himſelf: Chriſt being juſtified, a Believer comes to be juſtified; this might have been opened in the myſteries of Pardon of Sin: *There is a juſtifying firſt in Chriſt as in a common publick perſon, and then by faith in our own perſons.* Now though in the Fathers Juſtification of Chriſt he juſtifies us, yet not as particular perſons, but in him as a common perſon in the Name of all the Elect; and faith, that comes in that we might be juſtified

in

in our own particular persons, as before we were in Christ as a common person: Now Christ is justified first, and acquitted from all our sins, and this acquittance is made the ground of his challenge to all his Adversaries in the world, though the Prince of Devils come with all his power: yet sayes Christ, *he is near that justifies me, and he will make my face as a flint*, it is God that acquits me, who is my Adversary? let him come near: Oh its a blessed thing when thou hast got the pardon of thy sin! thou needest not care for all the reproaches the world can cast upon thee; thou mayst go up and down, and challenge any in the world to come in against thee, 1 Cor. 4. 3. *I pass not for mans judgement, he that judgeth me is the Lord*; the word translated *judgement*, in the Greek it is *mans day*: Man has his day here, and he thinks to weary out the People of God; why sayes *Paul*, I pass not for mans day, he that hath the supream judgement in his hands, he hath acquitted me, and I am well enough.

Of the Foundation of Eternal Life laid in Pardoning Mercy.

8. *Blessed is the man that hath his iniquities forgiven; for this is the foundation of eternal life*; whoever hath this mercy, hath a certain pledge put into his hands of eternal life, Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he predestinated, them he called: whom he called, them he justified: and whom he justified, them he glorified*: thou who art justified, and hast thy sin pardoned, thou shalt certainly be glorified: A Prince may pardon a man, but he cannot assure him of eternal life, though he give him his natural life: But God if he pardon, he makes it known to that soul that he shall live eternally with him in glory: Oh blessed is he then that hath his iniquities forgiven, for this is a pledge unto him of eternal life.

Of Pardon of Sin being the bottome of all true Comfort.

9. *Blessed is he that hath his sin pardoned; for pardon of sin is the very bottom of all true comfort: Be of good comfort your sins are forgiven*; if Christ speak but this word to a soul, though he be never so much dejected, it is enough to raise any drooping soul from

from the gates of Hell it ſelf. Be of good comfort oh ſoul, thy ſins are forgiven thee, Iſa. 40. 2. *Speak you comfortably to her, for her iniquities are pardoned:* God calls to comfort her when her iniquities are pardoned, this is the foundation of all true comfort: if you lay any other foundation to build your comforts on, certainly that building will totter and come to nothing, if this be not the foundation: You would fain have comfort, and you are every one looking out for comfort; and indeed it is as natural for the ſoul of man to ſeek for comfort, as it is for the fire to burn: there's no man but would fain have comfort; now look to the foundation, if you would not have the building totter, lay a good foundation: Many lay the foundation of their comforts in their ſins, and others in the creatures; but thou muſt muſt lay it in the pardon of thy ſin, in the free grace of God juſtifying thy ſoul, and that building will hold; lay it there and thou ſhalt be comforted here and for ever hereafter. And thus we have done with that Particular, That Pardon of Sin is a great mercy, becauſe it is a foundation and inlet to many other mercies: Bleſſed is the man that hath his iniquities forgiven, that hath ſuch a grand mercy, upon which many other mercies follow.

CHAP. V.

Of Pardoning Mercy paſſing through a great many difficulties.

5. *Argument.*

Bleſſed is the man that hath his ſins forgiven; for indeed, it is a mercy that paſſes through many difficulties before it comes to the ſoul; and that that paſſeth through many difficulties is ſtrong and great indeed, and therefore makes the man bleſſed, becauſe it is grace that doth paſs through many difficulties, it is an argument of a great deal of ſtrength of grace, when grace ſhall paſs through many difficulties; as it is an argument of the great ſtrength of ſin, when it paſſes through many difficulties to bring forth; a ſoul being ſet upon ſin, there lies a

great many difficulties in the way, yet luſt to that ſin being ſtrong, it will break through all difficulties to get to it; ſo in mercy, when God comes with mercy to forgive a ſoul, this mercy of God muſt go through abundance of difficulties before it gets to you, which argues it to be wonderful ſtrong mercy, and therefore makes him bleſſed that partakes of it. When God made the World, it was done with a word ſpeaking, God ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light*: But when God comes to pardon a ſinner, Heaven and Earth muſt be moved; there muſt be a greater work of God in pardoning of a ſinner, than in making of the world; certainly the work is greater, and paſſes through more difficulties. As,

Firſt, *All the wrongs that ever thou haſt done to God ſtand betwixt thee and pardon*; never did any man in the world wrong another man as thou haſt wronged God: How ſin wrongs God has in part been held forth to you, in the evil of ſin, and how contrary ſin is to the infinite holineſs of God, yet mercy breaks through that, yea, above all, that great and difficult work of the ſatisfying the infinite juſtice of God, yet mercy breaks through that, and there ſtands in that.

1. *This difficulty, that before thou canſt be pardoned, God muſt be made Man, and yet muſt remain the ſame God he was before*; thou cryeſt for pardon of ſin, or thou art undone; ſuppoſe now, that Gods bowels of mercy did even yearn towards thee for to pardon thy ſin, yet before this is done, there muſt be this great work done; that God muſt be made man, and yet remain the ſame God he was before; here is a mighty difficult work, a greater work than making of the world, and yet mercy breaks through this.

2. *Here's this ſtands between ſin and pardon, That when God is made Man, he muſt dye and be made a curſe*; and not only ſo, but God the Father muſt do it; he muſt take his own Son and ſtab him for thee, he muſt himſelf take him and put him to death, and himſelf muſt pour out his wrath upon his own Son, before thy ſins can be pardoned. Now that God the Father ſhould take his own Son, the Son of his delight, ſtab him to the heart, and himſelf put him to death, this is a mighty great work; and yet this muſt be done before thou canſt be pardoned.

2. *There's*

2. *There's this difficulty ſtands in the way, That before ſin can be pardoned, the blind, dead, wicked, carnal, ſottiſh heart of Man, muſt be raiſed up to perform the moſt glorious Act that ever any creature did*; which is an Act of believing: yet ſayes God, that thy ſin may be pardoned, I will put forth my infinite power to effect it, to raiſe that blind, dead, ſottiſh, carnal, wicked heart of man ſo full of all wickedneſs, to perform the greateſt work that ever any creature did, for ſo is believing; Gods mighty power is put forth to effect this: Now there is all theſe difficulties lying in the way, and yet mercy paſſes through them all to pardon ſin; ſurely then, that ſoul muſt needs be bleſſed that hath his ſin pardoned; that God ſets his heart upon him ſo much, that rather than he will not ſhew mercy unto him, he will paſs through all theſe great difficulties that lye in the way; and truly on conſideration of this, before I paſs any further, there are *three Meditations* that may be collected hence, and may come with a great deal of power upon all our ſouls.

Firſt, *Then it muſt needs be a great taking the Name of God in vain, for any man or woman to have ſlight thoughts of ſuch a mercy, as pardon of ſin is*, that comes through ſo many difficulties.

Secondly, *This may come with power upon our hearts, if Gods mercy paſs through ſo many difficulties for the pardon of thy ſin thou maiſt be content to indure much difficulty in ſeeking for the pardon of thy ſin*; thou ſeeſt what an evil ſin is, and art more ſenſible of it than ever thou wert before; well, thou art ſeeking for pardon, and thou complaineſt, thou haſt waited long for pardon, it may be a quarter, or half a year, or it may be twelve months, and thou haſt got little aſſurance of pardon, and thou findeſt it much more difficult than thou thoughteſt it would be, temptations come ſtronger than ever, and the Devil ſuggeſts more evil thoughts than ever; thou findeſt duties hard to fleſh and blood, and thou art wearied and tired with temptation, theſe are ſome difficulties; but yet art thou about that great work of ſeeking pardon of ſin, be contented to ſuffer ſome difficulties, yea, ten times more than thou haſt; if God ſee good to lay it upon thee, for Gods mercies paſs through difficulties to pardon thy ſin, and if thou get'ſt through, though thou meeteſt with difficulties, thou haſt no cauſe to complain at all; Why ſhould not you be

willing to paſs through difficulties in ſeeking pardon, when as Gods mercies paſs through many difficulties to come to thy ſoul; thou art going to God, and ſeeking to him for mercies, and there lye many difficulties in the way; when God was coming to thee, there lay many difficulties in the way, and yet he paſt through them all; therefore thou maiſt be content though thou meeteſt with ſome difficulties in ſeeking the pardon of thy ſins.

Thirdly, *This may make us willing to go through any ſervices, though they be hard, if thou art in getting of pardon*; Suppoſe God ſet us about ſome hard work that hath many difficulties in it, do not complain as if God were a hard Maſter, when he ſets you about any hard work; for be it known unto you, thou art never ſet about any ſuch hard work in all thy life for God, that hath ſo many difficulties in it, as the work of God in pardoning thy ſin hath; there are more difficulties when God comes to pardon thy ſoul for ſin, than in any ſervice whatever that God requires of thee; thou lookeſt upon the ſervice of God, and there are many difficulties in it; be contented, do not complain, for God paſt through many difficulties to pardon thy ſin; and this is another conſideration, the difficulties God paſſes through to pardon ſin, is a great Argument that that ſoul is bleſſed that hath his iniquities forgiven.

CHAP. VI.

Of Pardoning Mercy coming from the Fountain of Gods Everlaſting Love.

6. *Argument.* *When God comes to pardon ſin, it is ſuch a mercy as comes from the fountain of Gods Everlaſting Love*; other mercies do not; where this is not, you cannot make them Evidences of Gods eternal love; if God give you health of Body, good voyages at Sea, and good comings in in reſpect of the world, you cannot draw Arguments from hence, that God bears eternal love to your ſouls. But when he comes to pardon your ſins, it is a cer-

tain evidence, *that God hath ſet his love on thee* from all eternity; if there were a chain let down from Heaven, and thou couldſt take hold but of one link, it would certainly bring thee thither, both ends would come together. *Rom.* 8. 30. here's a chain of many links let down, and if thou canſt catch hold of the link of Juſtification, thou maiſt certainly catch hold of Predeſtination; for all hang together: if thou art *juſtified*, then know for certain that thou art a *predeſtinated* man or woman; whom God hath ſet his heart upon from all eternity to do thee good: and this is a great happineſs for a poor creature, while he lives in this world, to know that God hath ſet his heart upon him from all eternity to do him good; and indeed, we can never be at reſt until we come to this; if thy heart be right, thou canſt not be at reſt in the enjoyment of ſuch poor fare as God caſts to Reprobates, thou muſt have other comforts than any thing the world can afford; if thy heart be right, thou wilt never reſt until thou come to know Gods thoughts in his eternal purpoſes towards thee; it is no nicety nor vain curioſity, for men and women to ſeek to know what were the thoughts of God toward them from all eternity; it may be known, and God hath revealed it, eſpecially in the times of the Goſpel, God hath opened his boſome to reveal unto his people the thoughts he had of them from all eternity; and this makes a Pardoned ſinner to be ſo bleſſed; and this is more than any Malefactor can have from a Prince, he may be perſwaded to pardon him; and yet even preſently his heart may be as much ſet againſt him as againſt any man: yet now having got his Pardon, he thinks himſelf bleſſed, and goes his way: But now, when God pardons, it is not an act of a day, but ſuch an act as God hath ſet his heart upon from all eternity to do it; it is ſuch an act as the infinite wiſdom of God hath been ſet on work from all eternity to effect it: if a Malefactor come to a Prince for pardon, and the Prince ſay, I have been ſetting my thoughts a work to pardon you, ever ſince I heard of your crime, this will bring ſome comfort: But what is this to the comfort God brings to the ſoul that he pardons? When God comes to a ſoul, he does not only pardon, he ſayes not, ſoul I pardon thee: but know oh ſoul for thy comfort, that this is a work that my

wisdom and the councils of my will, have been a contriving from all eternity, to bring about thy pardon with my own honour, and here it is for thee, take it as a fruit of my eternal Councils: therefore *Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven*, because such purposes have been taken up in Gods eternal Councils to effect it.

CHAP. VII.

Of Pardoning Mercy, being a work that all the three Persons in the Trinity are ingaged in.

7. Argument. BLessed *is the man whose Iniquities are forgiven, because as there is no one thing hath taken up the heart of God more than this; so this is a work that all the three Persons in the Trinity are ingaged in* nothing more, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as to instance:

1. *For God the Father*, in *Isa.* 43. 25. he challengeth this as his own glory, *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my Names sake, and will not remember thy sins*; it is his Prerogative, *I am he*, God glories in it as a peculiar, belonging to none but himself, *Exod.* 33. 18. *Moses* desired to see the glory of God, and God promised to *make all his goodness pass before him*: and *Exod.* 34. 6. he proclaimed, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands*; and then to the point in hand, *forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*, here's the glory of God; Would you have a demonstration indeed, that Gods heart was set upon this as the greatest work that ever was done? take it in this, that the very thoughts of effecting this by the death of his own Son, made God very well pleas'd & delighted with his death; surely then his heart was much set upon it; for rather than he would not effect it, he would part with his own Son: Never was there such a hideous thing as the death of the Son of God; and therefore if there were any delight to be taken in it, & that God the Father took delight in it; there must be some great thing to sweeten

ſweeten it, ſuch an horrid thing as the death of the Son of God had need have ſome great thing to ſweeten it; what now ſweetned this to God the Father, that his own Son ſhould be put to death? Why? nothing but this, that hereby ſinners might come to be redeemed, juſtified and pardoned, nothing elſe would ſweeten it to God the Father, but this does, Iſa. 53. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*; and again, *the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand*; the Scripture ſays, God takes no delight in the death of a ſinner; and yet God did take delight in the death of his Son, it pleaſed God to ſee his Son bruiſed: when God the Father ſaw his Son under his wrath, ſweating drops of water and blood under the curſe of the Law, it pleaſed God well; certainly then there muſt be ſome mighty thing that muſt ſweeten this, and make the death of his own Son a delightful object to him; Why? the very thing that did it was this, that Chriſt being made a curſe, he thereby did redeem us from the curſe, procur'd the pardon of our ſins, and reconciled us unto God; and this very thing ſweetned the death of the Son of God unto God the Father, therefore the heart of God was much in it.

2. *For Chriſt*, What was the buſineſs that brought him from the Fathers boſome, made him content to take our nature upon him, to ſuffer, and to be a man of ſorrows, ſo as to delight in it? there was a kind of delight to Chriſt in induring the wrath of God; for *with deſire* (ſays Chriſt) *have I deſired to eat this Paſſover*, becauſe it was the Preparation to his Death and Sufferings of the wrath of God, in all the fruits and effects of it for the ſin of Man; and when Chriſt came to inſtitute the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and to give his blood for the remiſſion of ſins, the Text ſays, *He gave thanks*; What did he give thanks for? ſurely the thing for which he gave thanks, (upon which the Supper of the Lord is called the Euchariſt, from the *Greek* word that ſignifies Th nksgiving) was this, that by his death Remiſſion of ſins ſhould be obtain'd: when Chriſt was to die & ſuffer all the wrath of God that was due for our ſins, Chriſt bleſſed God & thanked God the Father for it: ſurely there muſt be ſome great matter to ſweeten it; that he ſhould be ſo affected as to bleſs God the Father for that that coſt him his life, and yet he did: Mark what it is that ſatisfies Chriſt for all this, Iſa. 53. 10.

It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and his soul was made an offering for sin.: all was laid upon Christ; Well, but what did Christ look for for all this? Ver. 11. *He shall see of the travel of his soul and shall be satisfied*; that that shall satisfie Christ for all his pains, labour and sufferings, shall be to see of the travel of his soul: What is that? What is the travel of Christs soul? What? Why by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justifie many; as if Christ had said, this is the very thing my Soul travells for, in all that I have done or suffered in all my life, that I might but bring this great business to pass, to justifie some souls, to get the sin of those poor souls that are thine Elect pardoned, and their persons justified: this my soul travells for, and oh Father let me but see this, the travel of my Soul, and I am satisfied: Christ accounted it worth all the travel of his Soul, in all he did and suffered, that he might justifie some souls, as if he had said, he would have no other boon from his Father, but only this; Father, if thou wilt but recompence all my travel with this, I shall for ever account my self that I am satisfied, and have enough: How should we be satisfied with Christ, when Christ accounts the pardon of our sins satisfaction enough? Shall Christ say, notwithstanding all my sorrows, let thy sin be pardoned, and I have enough? Wilt not thou now say; and let me have Christ and I have enough? Christ sayes to God the Father, let me have those souls pardoned, and I have enough; Oh then do thou say, let me have Christ and I have enough: Surely Christ is enough to satisfie thee, when the pardon of thy sin is enough to satisfie him.

3. *As the heart of God and Christ, so the heart of the Holy Ghost is in this business too*; the great work the Holy Ghost hath to do in this world, and the great business for which he was sent; it is to convince poor souls of the righteousness there is to be had in Christ for Justification, Joh. 16.8,9,10. *Christ will send the Comforter; and first he will convince the world of sin.* 2. *Of righteousness:* What is that? that is, when the Spirit comes, he will clear it up unto believers, and convince them that the righteousness that they must have to stand righteous before God in, is the righteousness of Christ alone: and this is a mighty work of the Spirit of God, and a work that would never have been done,

done, had not he come to have done it; it is such a great mysterie that we should be righteous by anothers righteousnes, that it is above the reason of all Men and Angels; all Men and Angels were never able to fathom this infinite depth, it is above their apprehensions that ever we should come to be righteous in Christ, and very few yet where Christ is made known, are convinced of it: Those men that take up Religion in a natural way, they never are convinc'd of the Righteousnes of Christ, it is a riddle and a mysterie to them; only those few souls whom God intends eternally to save, the Spirit of God is sent unto them from the Father and the Son to clear it unto them, that the righteousnes wherewith they must stand righteous before God, is the Righteousnes of Jesus Christ; this is the great work of the Spirit of God, and he comes on purpose to enlighten you in this great point, and to witness this great Truth unto you, Heb. 10.15. *Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness, for after that he had said before, this is the Covenant that I will make*, &c. ver. 17. *Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*, as the Principal part of the Covenant, and of this the Holy Ghost is a witness: This great Truth of the forgiveness of sins the Holy Ghost comes to bear witness of, and seals this to thy Soul, that thy sins are forgiven; this is the great work of the Holy Ghost, after believing to seal up the forgiveness of sin: and this is one great reason why the Holy Ghost hath the Title of *Comforter*, because as he comes to convince of sin, so also to witness and seal up forgiveness of sin to the soul: And indeed, as it shews the excellency of the mercy of forgiveness, because the Holy Ghost is so much in it, so the greatness of it, that must have so high a Person to witness it: and indeed, the Soul is not satisfied until it have this special witness of the Holy Ghost; 'tis true, there may be probable arguments drawn by signs of Gods love unto us; and the Holy Ghost may come in those signs: but besides that, there is the immediate witness of the Holy Ghost: to limit him to witness by signs only, is more than any man can have warrant for; and this I say further, that all the signs of Gods favour that we can have, will not satisfie the soul until there be this special work of the Holy Ghost sealing and witnessing the favour of God unto us; 1 *John* 3. there are many signs of Gods

favour in that Chapter, Vers. 9. *He that is born of God doth not commit sin.* And V. 19. *Hereby we know we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before him; and he that keepeth his Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him,* that's another sign, and *Ver.* 24. but the conclusion of all is this; *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*; it is the Holy Ghost must convince and satisfie the soul, of Gods love: many there are that would fain have their sins pardoned, and would fain have some signs of it; and perhaps I may hereafter give some signs. But now know, that all the signs in the world will not serve to quiet the heart, but that it may return again to its former doubts, till God come to pacifie the spirit by the witness of the Holy Ghost; for it is so great a matter, where once the Soul understands the infinite breach made between God and it by sin, that it must needs be more than an ordinary work to assure the Soul of Gods Reconciliation to it, and nothing can do it satisfactorily but the Holy Gost; he must come to the Soul to assure it of this thing: perhaps the case of a poor Soul is thus; Suppose a Prisoner in Goal lyes bound in fetters for some great offence against his Prince, and some friend comes and tells him there is hope of pardon: Oh, sayes he, 'tis too good news to be true; well, another comes to the grate of the Prison, and tells that he hears from the Court, the King hath sealed Pardons, and put such a ones name in, this is some comfort; but yet this frees him not from fears and doubtings. But now, suppose the Favourite of the Prince comes from the King himself, one that is of the Kings Bed-chamber, and one to whom the King opens his whole soul, and nothing the King doth but he is acquainted with it; he comes to this poor man, and bids him be of good comfort, I come from the King, and bring you a Pardon from him, shews it him, and sayes there it is, take it; Oh this revives his spirit, when such a special Messenger is sent unto him: so in this case I may compare all signs to be like some friend or other, that goes by the grate, and speaks of the happiness of such a man that he is pardoned; but the soul is under such blindness and fears, by reason of the guilt of sin, that God knows it is no easie matter to perswade it of pardon: But now God for the comfort of those that he intends good will unto, sends

his

his own Spirit that lyes in his own boſome, and knows all his ſecrets, to declare the mind of God, and to ſay to ſuch a ſoul, *Peace be to thee, thy ſins are forgiven*; now this ſatisfies the ſoul.

But it may be here objected, *How may I know it is the Spirit of God that witneſſes, and not my own fancies or deluſions of Satan.*

I anſwer, as we know the Sun by its own light, ſo we may know the Spirit by its own teſtimony; and though there may be ſome ebbs, yet it will riſe again; there is ſuch a witneſſing work of the Spirit, by a kind of ſweet and ſecret intercourſe between God and the Soul, whereby God over-powers all doubts and fears; though I do not ſay, every one hath it in a like ſenſible meaſure; yet this I ſay, when this full aſſurance comes, although there may be doubts and many queſtions before in the ſoul, for fear of being deluded, (for certainly many are deceived and deluded) yet then the Spirit over-powers all doubts and fears, and witneſſes to the Soul its own work: Do not you ſay, becauſe ſome are deluded with fancies, that there is no witneſs of the Spirit; when as there is ſcarce any point in the Goſpel the Scripture ſpeaks more about than this of the witneſs of the Spirit: indeed they that judge of the myſteries of the Goſpel by Humane Reaſon, and underſtand no further than that reaches too, and that are little acquainted with thoſe converſes that are between God and a believing Soul, they may ſlight this witneſs of the Spirit; but you muſt know, there is not any Soul that has aſſurance he ſhall go to Heaven, but it is wrought on by a high ſupernatural and myſterious way; and if there were no other way to evidence this to the ſoul but by ſome ſigns, this would be no higher evidence than by way of reaſon: But we are to know, as *great is the myſterie of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh*, ſo alſo *great is the myſterie of godlineſs, God juſtified in the Spirit*; God juſtified in the Spirit is a great myſterie, Chriſts Incarnation is a great myſterie, ſo is a Believers Juſtification as well as Chriſts Incarnation; ſo alſo the witneſs of Juſtification is a great myſterie; and therefore I beſeech you look up higher than for ſuch ſigns as Reaſon may reach unto, and beg of God to reveal this unto you, that thou maiſt have the

witness of the Spirit of God to testifie unto thee that thy sins are pardoned. Now blessed is the man, whose iniquities are forgiven, seeing God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is so much in it.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Pardoning Mercy being a Perfect Mercy.

8. *Argument.* *Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, for this mercy is a perfect mercy*, that is, where God doth pardon any sinner, such a one stands as perfect before God in point of Justification as *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, or any of the Prophets or righteous men that ever lived in the world: thou poor Soul, Man or Woman, Youth or Servant, if God come unto thee, and pardon any of your sins, thou standest as fully justified as *Abraham*, *Paul*, *Peter*, or any of the Apostles and Prophets; though in Sanctification thou fallest short of them, yet thou art justified as perfectly as ever they were: Justification is an act that is done altogether and at once, therefore a perfect work; and this is an Argument of infinite Consolation to the Saints of God, that the great business between God and them in point of Justification is perfected; *Psal.* 51. 7. *David* prayes to God that he would *purge him with Hyssop and he should be clean*; that is, that he might be cleansed by Justification, by having the guilt of sin taken from his Conscience by a renewed act of pardon; and then as it follows, *I shall be whiter than Snow*: the Saints of God though they be Sanctified, they are not whiter than the snow in Sanctification, but in Justification they are whiter than the snow; *no spot at all in them*, Ephes. 5. 27. *Christ presents his Church unto himself without spot*; in point of Justification every believing soul is without spot before the Lord, Numb. 23. 21. *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob*; that is, though God knows there is iniquity there, yet he sees it not to charge them with it, or impute it to them; all is done away in that regard by Justification: it is observable to this purpose, what we have

in Cant. 4. 7. *Thou art all fair my love, there is no ſpot in thee*, no ſpot in thee; there are ſpots in reſpect of *Sanctification*, yea, but in reſpect of *Juſtification* it may be ſaid of her, *There is no ſpot at all in thee; Thou art all fair my Love*, it is the words of Chriſt, he comes forth and ſayes, *Thou art all fair my Love*: Alas, when the Believer looks upon himſelf, his own duties and performances, he ſees nothing at all but ſpots, all beſmear'd and beſpatter'd all over; why, though thou lookeſt on thy ſelf beſpotted, yet Chriſt looks upon thee without ſpot, and God the Father looks upon thee through Chriſt without ſpot, and ſayes, *Thou art all fair, there is no ſpot in thee*; thou thinkeſt it may be, that if God ſhould make a diſcovery of thy heart to all thy Chriſtian friends and acquaintance, thou wouldſt appear ſo foul, that they would caſt thee out of their ſociety, and never have to do with thee more; yet for all this, Chriſt ſayes, *Thou art all fair, there is no ſpot at all in thee.* Juſtification admits of no degrees, no not in Heaven, thou art not more juſtified there than thou art here; thou art now as perfectly juſtified as ever, and accepted of Chriſt as ever: *Sanctification is renewed day by day*, it being a work of God within us, we increaſe in it daily; but Juſtification is a work of God without us, and ſo is perfected at once; and hence then this makes a pardoned ſoul bleſſed, becauſe pardon of ſin is of ſuch a nature, that it is a perfect work. Hence then I will but touch it. Here is,

1. *Abundance of comfort to a pardoned ſoul*, though thou art weak in Sanctification, and it troubles thee to think, how far thou comeſt ſhort of *Abraham's faith*, *Moſes his meekneſs*, *David's love*, *Paul's zeal*, *Solomon's wiſdom*, and *Job's patience*; yet this know, that thou art equal in Juſtification with *Abraham*, *Moſes*, *David*, and all the Prophets; and this may be a mighty comfort to thee againſt the weakneſs of thy Sanctification.

2. *This ſhould be a mighty ingagement upon thy ſpirit*; Has God made thee equal to them in Juſtification? how ſhouldſt thou labour to be like to them in Sanctification? think thus with thy ſelf, Is the mercy of God ſo rich and glorious to me, though I be a poor, wicked, wretched, vile ſinner, that I ſhould be made equal to the greateſt Saints in Juſtification? Oh how

should I labour to follow hard after them, and get as near to them as I can in point of Sanctification: this Argument should come with power and strength upon our hearts, to stir up all our endeavours to be like to them in point of Sanctification, that are equal with them in point of Justification. How should we imitate *Moses*'s Meekness, *David*'s Love, *Paul*'s Zeal, and *Job*'s Patience.

CHAP. IX.

Of Pardoning Mercy being an Irrevocable Mercy.

9. *Argument.* BLessed are they that have their Iniquities forgiven, for it is an irrevocable mercy; when God pardons sin, he never revokes it again, it is true, the soul that is pardoned may afterwards commit many offences, that may provoke the displeasure of God against him, yet he shall never so provoke God, as to cause him to revoke this mercy of pardon to all eternity: if thou art once pardoned, thou art pardoned for ever: It is not so with God, in pardoning as it is with men; a King pardons a Malefactor on condition of his good behaviour afterwards; though it is true, a Believer will be more careful of offending after he is pardoned than ever before: But yet, God does not pardon me so much on condition of my good behaviour as of his free grace, therefore it abides: He does not say to a poor soul, I will pardon you, but it shall be on this condition, that you behave yourself well, and if you be found tripping in any one thing, I will recal my pardon back again: it is so with a Princes Pardon, a man that is pardoned for his life, if that man afterwards offend, perhaps breaks the Peace, which in another man would not be so great a matter, for he could soon satisfie the Law for it; but he that goes under pardon for his life, if he break the Peace, it costs him his life; whereas another, if he strike a man, it is but an Assault and Battery in him, but he that has his Pardon for his life, for such a thing done by him, his Pardon may be revok'd again, and it may cost him his life: I hope you will

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not abuse this grace of God. I know not how to open it to Believers but with a great deal of danger to others; but how much danger soever it may be to others, yet it must be opened and delivered to Believers, it is Gods mind that his grace should be made known unto them, he would have them to know it to the full, that his Pardoning Mercy is irrevocable, and therefore a Believer should not question his Justification upon every failing in his Sanctification, this is a dishonour to the free and rich grace of God, if on every failing we call in question that great work of the Justification of our souls, either to say, or think, I indeed did hope before that God had pardoned the sins of my youth, and all my antient sins, but falling into sin again, I am afraid all is undone; all that God hath done unto me is undone again, and I must answer for all my sins: this I confess will come upon the Conscience, specially upon the committing of any new sin; but though it do, yet if ever you have been assured of the pardon of your sin, know, this mercy shall never be recalled again; *the foundation of God standeth sure*; and this is a fundamental mercy that alwayes abides: therefore as we observed in *Cant.* 4. 7. Christ sayes, *Thou art all fair my Love, there is no spot in thee*; but in *Cant.* 5. 2. you shall find she was in a sleepy secure and sinful condition, as a man or woman asleep, they might do what they would with her; men might impose what they would upon her, put her in what posture they pleased, and yet she was unsensible; but yet in this condition her heart was awake, *I sleep but my heart waketh*, there remained a Principle of grace alive in her: but mark what Christ said, though she confest she was asleep, yet Christ sayes, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled*: this was spoken when the Church was in a secure sinful condition: yet this is the voice of Christ calling the Church his Sister, his Love, his Dove, his Undefiled one, when she was in that secure condition; which shews the grace of God in pardoning sin is not called back again: and because this is a point wherein much treasure lyes, I shall a little open the Irrevocablenes of Gods mercy in his Pardoning and Justifying Grace; and for this I shall give you some places of Scripture, which being opened, as they will shew the greatnes of the mercy, so they will afford abundant mat-

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ter of Consolation and Encouragement to every believing soul. The

First Scripture Expression I shall name is in Isa. 43. 25. where the Lord tells his people, that *he blots out their transgressions*; God seems to take much delight in this Phrase, and therefore doubles it, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins*: Now this phrase of blotting out is taken from the custome of Tradesmen that have their Books of Accounts, wherein they enter all their Debts that are owing to them by such and such men: Now when these come to be paid, the Debt-book is crossed or blotted out; if any of you owe a debt, when you come to pay it, you call for the Debt-book to see it crossed or blotted out, and then you assure your selves you shall never hear of it more. Now you must know, that all sinners are debtors to the Lord; they are in *a debt of punishment* for want or failing in paying him *a debt of Obedience*: many men by their sin run into debt with God daily, and because God does not call for the debt presently; they think there's nothing between God and them, but carry it as if all were well; as many Gallants run into Tradesmens debt to hang fine Cloaths upon their backs, and ruffle it up and down in the world, and never think of their debts till their Creditors come and arrest them, and cast them into Goal, and there they lye in Prison, for all their ruffling it up and down in the world: Just so men and women by their sin run into debt with God, and though God do not call for the debt presently, yet they are recorded in Heaven, it is as certain that every sin of any man or woman is set down in Gods Debt-book, as any debt you owe is set down in your Creditors Book: and as certainly must your debts be called for, and satisfaction and payment made unto God for them, as certain as any Tradesman will call for payment of his debt: Now this is the work of Justification between God and your Souls, if ye would know the nature of it. When Jesus Christ sees a poor soul that God the Father hath given to him to save, this run into debt, Christ comes and layes down a price before God the Father, to pay this debt: and Christ sees that the debt be blotted out of the Book: Now when God comes with pardoning mercy to a Soul, God shews the Debt-

Book

Book to a Believer, and causes him to see all his debts blotted out; and by that he certainly assures the Soul his debt shall never be called for again, this is such a mercy as is Irrevocable, it shall not be brought back again, the debt being once paid shall never more be called for; this is the first expression, and it is a blessed one. Many men that are run into debt, and are in danger every hour to have some Baylifs arrest them, they cannot look out of their doors, but they are ready to fall upon them, they would think themselves happy, if they might have any that would come and lay down all, and satisfie the debt, and that they might see the debt blotted out, they would think themselves happy indeed: Well, know that it is so with God when he comes to pardon sin, the Debt-book is blotted out, and all Bonds cancell'd.

Secondly, *Though they be blotted out, yet they may be before Gods face*, and God may see them, though he will not call for them again: therefore the Scripture tells us, that God will take that course with the sins of Believers, as that he will cast them behind his back, and never so much as lay the debt before his face to look upon them, Isa. 38. 17. *Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back*, that which *Hezekiah* spake of himself, is true of every believing soul, God casts the sins of every Believer behind his back; when a man casts a thing behind his back, he does it to that end, that he might take no farther notice of it; but though God casts a mans sins behind his back, yet if they be not very far, he may easily turn his face and look upon them when he will: therefore mark further,

Thirdly, *Another Scripture expression*, Psal. 103. 10. *As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*; thus God expresseth himself, to satisfie the souls of his people, that their sins shall never be called for again; the East and West, it is an expression to note out the utmost distance; the East and West are so remote, that those two Points can never come together; so the sins that God has pardoned to any soul, they shall never be called for again.

Fourthly, *Though they be removed as far as the East is from the West, yet Gods eye may look a great way off*, though those Points be at so great a distance to our eyes, yet not so to the eye of

God; therefore there is another expression that may make it more full, that God will never look upon their sins again that he has once pardoned, he blots them out, he casts them behind his back, he removes them as far as the East is from the West; and if that be not enough to satisfie thee, Micah 7. 19. *He will cast them into the bottom of the Sea*; things that are cast into the bottom of the Sea, are utterly thrown out of sight, never to be looke for again. Well, but though God cast them into the bottom of the Sea, he may think upon them. Therefore,

Fifthly, Mark another expression, further to satisfie thee, God sayes, *He will remember them no more*; they shall be so far from being thought upon, that God sayes he will not remember them any more; but you will say, it is impossible for God but to remember them; yea, but when God pardons, it shall be as Irrevocable, as if God did never remember them; there are divers Texts remarkable for this, Isa. 43. 25. *I will blot out thy transgressions,* ——— *and will not remember thy sins: I, may be not now* (thou maist say) *but he will hereafter*; see what is said in Jer. 31. 34. *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*; neither now nor hereafter, *I will remember their sin no more.*

Sixthly, *They shall be so forgiven, as that there shall be no more mention of them*; there shall never be the least mention of a believers sins before God, and for that see *Ezek.* 33. 16. it is spoken of every godly man indefinitely that turns to God, and is a Believer, *None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him*; by the way, let men take heed how they upbraid the people of God for any of their former sins: Perhaps you knew such a one in the times of his ignorance, and you say he was a lyar, a Drunkard; but now God has revealed his mercy to him in the pardon of his sin, and God sayes he will not mention them any more: Take heed how you cast their sins committed in the times of their ignorance, in their teeth, saying, oh you are so precise now, I knew what you were a little before; Shall the God of Heaven say, he will not mention them any more; and yet will you do it? God will take it very ill, at your hands; this is admirable comfort to every Believer, that God will not remember their sin any more; he would have thee to

remember them, to humble thy soul for them, and to renew thy repentance, but he will not remember them to upbraid thee with them, nor would he have others do it. *Beza* speaking of himself when he was young, *He made some vain and sinful Poems, which his Enemies upbraided him with afterwards, and cast them in his teeth*, saves he, *These men envy me the grace of God*, because God has vouchsafed to me his grace, they envy me, and cast in my teeth the evil that I have formerly done: Oh what a comfort and priviledge is this to thee! Oh thou believing soul, though thou wer't never so wicked and abominable before, yet I tell thee from God this day, in whose presence thou standest, that he will never remember thy sin any more, and this may be a mighty encouragement for men and women to believe and turn from all their wicked wayes, though thou hast been never so vile, abominable, and wicked: yet be it known unto thee this day, that if thou wilt come in and believe, God will never mention any of thy wickednesses more, they shall be so forgotten as they shall never be mentioned; thou it may be, art afraid that either here in this life, or at the day of Judgement all thy sins shall be charged on thee; well, be not afraid: perhaps there are many of you that are conscious to your selves of great sins committed, and you would give a thousand Worlds to be discharged of them: Oh say some, there are such and such sins committed, that are so great, that they cannot be forgiven; I may mourn and grieve for them, but what shall I be the better? the sins of my youth lye so heavy on me, and God and my own Conscience upbraids me; and what comfort can I have in my life, when God and my own Soul upbraids me? Well, be of good comfort, and be incouraged, this day to come in and believe this blessed tidings, that where God pardons sin, he will mention them no more, and he will take it very ill at the hands of any that shall mention them to upbraid thee for them.

Seventhly, *Yet further, to set forth the fulness of this mercy, when God pardons sin, they shall be so done away as that they shall not be found.* Jer. 50. 20. *In those dayes—the Iniquity of* Israel *shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of* Judah, *and they shall not be found*; for I will pardon them, whom I re-

serve; and if I pardon them, then they shall be so done away, as that they shall not be found.

Yet further, the righteousness Believers have in Christ is called an *everlasting righteousness*, and therefore abides for ever, and cannot be afterwards taken away, Dan. 9. 24. *Seventy weeks are determined —— to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*; the righteousness that is put upon thy Soul by Christ, in the pardon of thy sin, it is an everlasting righteousness, and will abide everlastingly. Yet further, *Heb.* 10. 14. it is said, *That Christ by one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, that is, justified; Justification being called by the name of Sanctification, or them that are sanctified; that is, set apart to be made partakers of the great blessing of the new Covenant, to have a share in the blood of Christ for Justification; Christ by one offering has for ever perfected them that are sanctified; therefore being perfected in Justification, there is no recalling this mercy back again.

Once more, this mercy is set out by the typical service of the Scape-Goat, Levit. 16. 20. *On whose head they were to put all the sins of the People, all their transgressions, and all their iniquities, and send him into the Wilderness*, or Land of forgetfulness, amongst wild beasts, never to be looked after again; so are the sins of all Believers laid upon Christ, and carryed into a Land of forgetfulness, and shall never come to be charged any more: So much for that particular of the Irrevocableness of Pardon of Sin, which shews that blessed is that man or woman that hath their sins pardoned, because they shall never be recalled again.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of Pardoning Mercy, being such a Mercy as is denyed to the fallen Angels.

Blessed is the man that hath his iniquities forgiven; for this is a mercy that God hath denyed to the fallen Angels: God in pardoning thy sin, does more for thee than he would do for those thousand thousand millions of Angels; it is a mercy that God has denyed to those millions of Angels that sinned against him: Suppose a poor wretched man be guilty of Treason against the King, and as he is, so a great part of the chief Nobility of the Land are guilty also, as well as he: But now when the King comes to look upon them, he sets his heart on this poor man (that perhaps begged from door to door) and sayes this poor creature shall be forgiven, I will pass by his offence, and not only so, but advance him into high and great favour at the Court, and condemns all the Nobles: Now if this poor man shall see all the Noble men in chains, that were guilty but of one offence: and he perhaps hath been guilty for acting in a treasonable way forty, fifty, or seventy years: and the Noble men guilty but for one offence: and this poor wretched creature sees these Noble men in chains, and knows that all they and every one of them are condemned to suffer most dreadful tortures, to dye a most dreadful torturing tormenting death: Now what a mighty aggravation is this of the mercy of the King, that shall pardon the offence of this poor creature; how will he stand amazed, admiring at the greatness of it; I that am guilty of the same offence, yea, more guilty than they, and that I shall be pardoned, and the chief of the Nobility of the Kingdom must dye a most torturing tormenting death, for their offence; what a difference hath the Kings favour made between me and them! Certainly this is the ease for all the world, with any poor soul whose sins are pardoned; God has done as much for thee, to the full; the Angels were the most glorious creatures that ever God made, and thou art but a poor worm in comparison of them; they sinned against him

10. Argument.

but once, and thou art guilty of millions of transgressions, and yet God sets his heart on thee, and sayes, I will do great things for thee, though I pass by thousands, millions of Angels; I will magnifie my rich grace to this poor creature in pardoning his sin, and advance him to high favour, though I condemn them into everlasting chains of darkness; now when a poor creature comes to see the infinite riches of Gods grace that hath made such a difference between him and the Angels: how will he stand admiring of it? methinks this should mightily work upon the hearts of all poor sinners, and make them to say, What shall God pass by such excellent creatures as the Angels, the most excellent creatures that ever God made, and come to me a poor worm, to set his heart on me, and shew mercy to me; Oh let me pass by all the excellencies of the creatures to perform my duty unto him; Hath God past by the most excellent of his creatures that mercy might come to me? Oh let me pass by all the glories and excellencies of any thing in this world, that my Soul may come in, in a way of duty and service unto him: Shall God leave the glorious Angels to shew mercy to me, and to do good for me, and shall not I leave my base lusts for him? Shall not I be content to leave any thing to serve him? Shall I satisfie any base lust, with the neglect of him? God forbid. This is another Argument, that they are blessed that have their sins pardoned, because God does that for them that he will not do for the fallen Angels.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of Pardoning Mercy being given to a few.

FUrther, *Blessed is he that hath his iniquities forgiven, because it is a mercy that is given but to a little handful of the world, the whole world lyes in wickedness*, as carrion in a ditch, or as Prisoners under the chains of guilt of sin, and yet that God should pull some of these out, that lie as in a filthy Dungeon, this is a wonderful mercy. A Prince that hath many offenders, usually pardons the most, and executes the fewest; But God usually executes the most, and pardons fewest. 11. *Argument.*

But how comes this to pass, seeing God is a God of more mercy than any Prince; how is it that a Prince should pardon most, and execute the fewest, and God do the contrary? *Object.*

Answ. 1. Because the execution of many that are guilty, would be a troublesome and dangerous thing unto a Prince, he cannot do it when the most have offended: but God can easily execute thousands of thousands, and all with one word speaking. *Answ.*

Further, If a Prince should execute all that offend, he should have a want of his Subjects: But God wants not the creatures, he has no need of us: but a Prince may want his Subjects, and therefore if there be any way in the world to preserve them, and keep them in any way subject to him, the Prince will not destroy them. 2.

Besides, the Prince executes the fewest, and saves the most; *Because the execution of a few may be a means to bring others unto allegiance*: But when God comes to execute Malefactors, the execution of some cannot be a means to work good on others, especially at the great day; 'tis true, in this world God is long-suffering, and executes a few, that it may be a means to work good on others; But how is God said to be a God of rich and glorious mercy, and yet pardons very few, and executes most; for all the world have been in Treason against him; how is it then, God pardons fewest and destroyes most? I hope to give you very 3.

very good reason and satisfaction, in shewing you how the infinite glory of the mercy of God appears, and yet but few are pardoned; yea rather the more, because that few are pardoned: God would thereby manifest the more his glorious mercy.

1. *It may well stand with the glorious riches of the mercy of God, that many are destroyed, and yet but few pardoned, thus, Because that God would have a proportion between his Justice and Mercy*; you say, he would have a proportion, Is not he as merciful as he is just? Then there must be as many pardoned as condemned. No, if God will observe a proportion between his mercy and justice, and that he will have his Justice appear as well as his Mercy, then more must be damned than saved; How does that appear? thus; *Because the glory of Gods justice in damning twenty hundred, is not so much as the glory of his Mercy in saving two*; you may conceive it by what is ordinarily used among men: If the King save but two men that are Malefactors, he magnifies his mercy as much in that as his justice if he hang up a hundred: so if God save but two, his mercy is as much magnified as his justice in damning twenty hundred, the reason is this; *Because there is something in the creature that calls for Gods justice*, that requires that: *But there is nothing in the creature, that requires his mercy*; when God manifests his justice, he does such a work as is due to the Creature; there is something in the Creature that challenges such a work from God: but when God comes to manifest mercy, there is nothing at all in us that should require such a work from God; no, his mercy is free, altogether from himself, 'tis his own work, and proceeds from his own heart's love, and nothing in us that may challenge it from him: Now seeing there is that in the Creature that challenges justice, and nothing at all that can require mercy, therefore if God shew mercy but to a few, it is as great a glory to his mercy, as it is to his justice, if he condemn a hundred; but if he should save as many as he condemns, the mercy of God would be beyond all proportion to his justice, but because that cannot be, hence it is that few are saved, and many damned.

Answer 2. *There are more damned than saved, because God would thereby manifest his mercy the more to them that are saved*, by suffering so many others to perish: this is one end that God

God hath in it, that their destruction might set out the excellency of the glory of his grace to thee. When a Painter would draw a Scutcheon, or a Picture in Or, or any other curious colours, he layes the ground-work in black, and then the beauty of the other colours will thereby most appear: thou oh soul that hast thy sin pardoned, know that God layes the ground-work of thy mercy in the black dismal destruction of multitudes of ungodly sinners, he gives them their due, that that is their right; but the ultimate aim of God in it rises to this, that their destruction may make the brightnes of his glorious grace appear the more gloriously to them that are saved; that the Saints whose sins God hath pardoned, may in Heaven have this argument to praise his grace so much the more, because they are culled out of the mass and multitude of sinners that are damned; this will mightily inflame the hearts of Saints in giving God glory in Heaven, when they shall see so many thousands and millions of thousands cast down to eternal destruction; that God should do this to set off the riches of his grace to them: How will this inflame their hearts in giving God glory, and this God aims at as the top of his glory that he might have a company to be the eternal objects of the riches of his grace; and this shews the base and low account God hath of wicked men, that he lets them perish eternally, that he might magnifie the glory of his grace to Saints. What an aggravation is it of the greatnes of Gods mercy to Saints, when he is content that so many thousands of others shall perish, that his mercy to them may more gloriously appear? As when a Prince hath a Child born, that he might shew his honour to the Child in solemnizing the Christning of the Child; it may be thousands of Oxen and Sheep shall lose their lives in the solemnizing of the joy the Prince hath in his Child; If the Solemnity of the Joy the Prince hath in that little Infant may be the cause of thousands of creatures losing their lives, this shews the dear respect he hath to his Child, or else he would never let so many creatures go to the Shambles, but that he might shew his respect to his little Infant: So layes God, there is a handful of People that I have thoughts to do good to, to all eternity, and I have set my heart upon them, and that I may manifest the greatnes of my mercy to them, I

will let thousand thousands of others perish eternally, to be but as a black ground for that glorious work, that I intend to manifest in the riches of my grace in Christ in the pardoning of their sin; thus you see it is a peculiar mercy, and therefore blessed are they that have their iniquities forgiven; *for it is a mercy that is peculiar to them only.* Oh how ought they to bless God, that he hath called them out of the multitude, when he has left others to the sway of their own carnal foolish and malicious hearts to go on against the wayes of grace; and all *because he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.*

CHAP. XII.

Of the Possibility of Pardoning Mercy, how it would be prised by poor Souls now under wrath.

12. *Argument.* FVrther, Blessed is he that hath his iniquities forgiven, *because the very possibility of it to thousands of creatures now under wrath would be prised more, than ten thousand worlds,* to have but a possibility of it upon any terms, those that are now damn'd in Hell, and see the streaks of Gods dreadful wrath against them for their sin, that are now swallowed up in the gulf of misery and condemnation, if they might have but any possibility to have their sins pardoned, how would they prise it, if such a Messenger were sent from God to Hell-gates to call there and to cry out, *O ye damned spirits, behold a message from the Almighty, I come unto you from him, and this is the message to let you know, That there is a possibility upon some terms (that God will require) that your sins may be pardoned, and you delivered from that dreadful wrath you now lye under?* How would the damned spirits sing and rejoyce, and look about them to attend this message? What acclamations would there be in Hell in the midst of those fiery flames? What holding up of hands and rejoycing would there be to hear of such a thing, that there is a possibility on any terms? they would not stand to enquire what the terms were, whether hard or easie, they would answer, let them

them be what they will, if there be but a possibility it is enough, thinking every one it might be he: Well then, if the possibility of being saved, would be received with such joyfulness by the damned in Hell; What then is the Possession of it, and glorious knowledge of it to a soul that is already pardoned? If they would all cry out, on supposition a message should be delivered of a possibility that some should be freed from Hell, and have their sins pardoned? They would all cry out, O blessed, blessed indeed is he that shall have his sins pardoned, and be delivered from Hell; if they would give this testimony, let us give it much more: Though there be a blessed difference between their condition and yours, yet not long since there was not, it may be, for ought you know, some of them might go to Church with you, sit in the same Pew, and hear those Sermons of the Evil of Sin, which now they are gone to feel, and are shut up in the bottomless pit, beyond any possibility of pardon: But this is granted to you all that are before the Lord this day; In the Name of God I can boldly preach this unto you, that if you come in and believe, there is a possibility, yea, even for the worst of all, they may come in and be pardoned. Now if the damned in Hell would prise it so high, if there were a possibility for them to be pardoned, shall not you prise it as high as they? As I remember in setting out the evil of sin, that was one thing that aggravated the sin of men above the Devils, that *the Devils believe and tremble*, and yet some men will not do so much as the Devils: so now I say, if there were but a possibility of pardon to the damned in Hell, how would they rejoyce; and shall not you rejoyce more than the damned souls in Hell would? Bethink your selves, if the damned souls in Hell would rejoyce, if they had a message of a possibility for them to be saved, methinks you should not be quiet, if you find not the same workings in your hearts as would be in theirs; Shall a poor Minister be forc'd to say, there is less hopes to prevail with you than if he were to preach to those in Hell? Shall he say, there would be better Auditors in Hell than are here? God forbid it should be so, that there should be more stirring in Hell (if they might but hear of a probability of being pardoned) than there is with you, if your hearts are not stirred at the

bearing of this blessed Doctrine of the Pardon of Sin; that there would be better Auditors in Hell than you are, whose hearts are not stirred in hearing the glorious mysteries of the Gospel opened, how a sinner may come to get the pardon of his sins; God forbid it should be so.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Pardon of Sin, being the special end of all Gods Ordinances.

13. *Argument.* FUrther, *Blessed is he that hath his Iniquities forgiven, because forgiveness of sin it is the special end of all the Ordinances of God*: the Ordinances of God that he has appointed and set up in his Church, attain their end in this blessed effect, in the forgiveness of sin; and it is an argument there is much blessedness in pardon of sin, because those precious Ordinances of Christ attain their special ends in it; *there are three great Ordinances I shall instance in, the Word, Sacraments, and Discipline*: and the people of God should count themselves in a happy condition when they see those blessed ends wrought on them, which God hath appointed those Ordinances to effect.

1. *For hearing*, 'tis a great Ordinance that Christ hath appointed. *When he ascended on high he gave gifts unto men*; upon Christs Triumphal Ascension to God the Father, he gave this great gift unto his Church, that his Church should have Pastors and Teachers; which by the way, argues the horrible wickedness of those that slight Pastors and Teachers of his Church; because it is part of the glorious gift of Christ when he ascended on high: Well, did Christ ordain Pastors and Teachers for the preaching the Word; surely it is for some great end and purpose that he hath in it, there is surely some great glory he intends to reap by it. What is the end for which Christ hath set up this great Ordinance? 2 Cor. 5. 18. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, and hath committed*

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to us the Ministry of Reconciliation. Ministers of the Word are Ministers of Reconciliation that God hath given to his People: What is that? read the next verse, to wit, *That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:* Now then, there is a word of Reconciliation, and this is committed unto us, God hath appointed that we should have this Word of Reconciliation to convey it unto you, What is this? to wit, That God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself not imputing their sins; so then *forgiveness of sin is the end of this Doctrine of Reconciliation,* that there should be forgiveness and pardon of sin to poor souls in and through Christ Jesus; so that this shews the great scope of this Ordinance, and the end of it, to wit, forgiveness of sin: therefore no wonder we stick in this Point, because the great business we have to do, is to declare the Ministry of Reconciliation, when a Minister is about that, he is about the work that God hath appointed him to do: all other Doctrines are but to make way for this, and to teach people how to walk worthy of it; and this is the only taking Doctrine to all those that God hath appointed this mercy to, though we as Ministers of Christ preach against the vanities and profits of this world; but this is not the main thing, nor the right method of Preaching to work upon the hearts of People, nor the great end of Christs Ascension, he did not give gifts principally for these things, but that men should be able to reveal the great Doctrine of Pardon of sin: Ministers need not to keep a stir to get esteem and love, and to make themselves honourable among the People; if they did but apply themselves to Preach this great Doctrine God hath set them about, That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins, they cannot but gain honour in the hearts of those that God hath appointed this mercy too; (Many complain they want respect and honour, let them take pains in this Doctrine, and they cannot choose but they must get honour, if once this Word of Reconciliation take hold on any mans heart by Faith and Repentance, let men speak against such a Minister never so much, say what they will of him, his heart will not be taken off from him, but will be ready to answer as the poor blind man did the

Scribes and Pharisees who railed on Christ, John 9. 24. *Saying, give glory to God; but we know this man is a sinner: He answered whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see, he it was that opened my eyes*; thus he answered their slander: and so when others clamour against a Minister, and speak evil of them, that soul that hath his eyes opened, he will say, I am sure God hath done great things for me by him: he hath shewed me the evil of sin, and the sad condition I was in by nature, and he hath revealed to me the exceeding riches of the mercy and grace of God, and my soul hath found it so, God hath come to my soul in his Preaching: Now such a Ministry as this will certainly ingage the hearts of people to them; 'tis not the man so much as Christ in the man, and this is the end of our Ministry, not to tell this or that conceit or story, but to shew you the riches of the grace of God in the pardon of sin, and the Justification of you Souls through Christ Jesus, your Acceptation and Reconciliation through him, this is the first Ordinance.

2. *The Sacraments*, for what purpose hath Christ ordained them? the main end for which they were ordained is for Sealing; in the Supper is sealed up Gods mercy in the pardon of sin, *Mat.* 26. 28. Christ tells his Disciples, *The Cup is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of Sin*; as if Christ had said, this is the great Ordinance to seal unto People the pardon of their sins: Brethren, the King does not use to set his Broad Seal to trifles, and toyes, and fancies, but unto things of great concernment and consequence, they must be such that shall have the Broad Seal: so here, because pardon of sin is such a blessed thing, the Broad Seal of Heaven is ordained to seal it; and when the Sacrament is administred rightly, it is no other but the *Broad Seal of Heaven to seal up the pardon of thy sin*, & so should men and women come to receive the Sacrament, they should think this day is a sealing day, as in Courts of Justice they have their sealing-days, & 'tis usually said, such a day is a sealing-day, so a Sacrament-day is a sealing-day, sealing up to you the great blessedness of forgiveness of sin; a Soul thinks thus, *I am a poor wretched vile sinner before the Lord, woe unto me, thus and thus have I done, woe is me. But I have heard of the riches of*

Gods

Gods grace in pardoning my sin; and this day God calls me to come in, and have the pardon of my sin sealed with the Broad Seal of Heaven, that my soul may be assured, and I may go away in peace, and be comforted and quieted in the great business that lyes upon me, those sins of mine that have so grated on my Conscience, and for which I have had dreadful apprehensions of the Clouds of Gods displeasure hanging over my head: this day I am to go to have the sealing of a pardon of them all. Thus should men and women come to the Sacrament with such thoughts upon their hearts, as an Ordinance appointed and ordained by Christ for the sealing up the pardon of their sins.

3. *The third Ordinance is the Ordinance of Discipline, whose sins soever you remit they are remitted*, Joh. 20. 22. and those who are cast out of the Church, and then received in again, find it to be an Ordinance of Christ, to assure them of remission of their sins. It casts out those that are scandalous, and when they repent, it receives them in again, and thereby assures them of the pardon of their sins.

A Transition to the Application. Having done with the Explication, if you would run over and make some recollection of what has been delivered of the glorious blessedness of this mercy of forgiveness of sins, you might see the effects following thereupon. I have shewed you the *abundant grace* of God that is declared in the forgiveness of sin; I have shewed you the many *mysteries* that there are in it, and that it is an *inlet* to many other mercies; I have shewed you the great *difficulties* it passes through, and how much the *heart* of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, was in this mercy; I shewed you, it was a *perfect and an irrevocable mercy*, a mercy denyed to Angels, & shewed but to a few of mankind compared to those that are past by; I have shewed, it is a mercy, the very *possibility* of it would make the damned to rejoyce, and it is a mercy, that is the end of all *Ordinances*: And now having come to some period of the Explication, methinks that Scripture comes presently into my mind, that notable place in Rom. 8. 31. *If these things be so*, if God thus gloriously appear, in the riches of his grace for the pardon of sin, *What shall we then say to these things?* the Apostle after he had spent some time in opening the Doctrine of free

Justification

Justification, for the working is upon the heart of the Romans, and his own heart too, sayes, *What shall we say to these things?* the holy Apostle stood as a man amazed at the wonderful riches of the grace of God in pardoning of sin, in the verse before, having said, *Moreover whom he did predestinate them he called, and whom he called, them he justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified*: And having spoken much to the point of Justification in this Chapter, he concludes at ver. 33. *Now what shall we say to these things?* as if he had said, Lord, how does thy glory appear in the Justification of a sinner, and pardoning his sin through Jesus Christ? that we cannot but stand amazed at the greatness of thy glory appearing herein; that we know not what to say, there is so much of thy glorious grace appears, that our mouths are stopped; What shall we say to these things? So now, after we have heard of these glorious things, of the glorious Revelation of the grace of God in and through his Son, working in such a glorious and mysterious way of godliness for the justifying of a sinner, and pardoning of his sin: if we could now sit down as men and women amazed and astonished, as having our hearts so filled with the glory of these things, as being not able to express our selves; but even sit down amazed at the brightness of the glory of them, it would be an excellent fruit of our attendance in hearing those things, we should sanctifie the Name of God in it, and 'twould be very happy for us; but if not while we are here together, yet, get into your Closets, and look into this mysterie of godliness, and recollect what you can of that which you have heard, and let this consideration lye warm upon your hearts and thoughts: O Lord! what shall we say to these things? that God should have such thoughts of such mercy and grace in the pardon of sin, as we have heard; What shall we say to it? and though for the present your hearts be not able to express more, yet by meditation, sure the fire will kindle, and bring forth some admirable expressions in glorifying the Name of God, or in singing some Psalm to his praise, or in doubling and trebling that blessed acclamation with the heavenly Host, Luk. 2. 14. *Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth peace, good will towards men*, O here it the good will of God towards poor wretched vile men; *Glory be*

to

to God in the Highest; Lord, What is man that thou shouldst be so mindful of him? thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels; nay, as you have heard this day, God has set him above those Angels that sinned against him; Christ would not shew mercy to them, they could not be pardoned; this is for poor sinners in the world, a generation of those that seek him, that have this great mercy of pardon and forgiveness of sin revealed to them; What shall we say to these things? the Apostles expression may help us to make way to the Application, and as I have told you we should sanctifie the Name of God, in standing amazed at the wonderful grace of God that gloriously appears in the Justification of a sinner, as we have opened in many Particulars. And now we have many things to say in the Application of these things, for the answer to that question, *What shall we say to these things?* attend in the fear of God, and you shall hear in the Application what shall be said to those things, you have heard in the former Doctrine.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Dishonour that is done by Men to the Pardoning Grace of God by slighting of it.

FIrst, *This we have to say to these things, Surely if the Pardon of Sin be so great a mercy as you have heard, and that there is such a wonderful work of God in it; then it must needs be a horrible and vile thing to sin against this grace that the heart of God is so much in*; to dishonour this great work of God must needs be a very vile and horrible thing: And this hath been my intention, my very plot, as to set forth the greatness of the grace of God in the mercy of forgiveness; so also to keep you from sinning against this grace. If he be blessed upon whom such a great and glorious work of God is wrought in forgiveness of sin; then it must needs be a most horrible and dreadful thing for any man or woman to sin against this grace of God; and horrible to dishonour such a great work of God as this is.

Quest. *But who are they that dishonour this great work of God?* or how many wayes may we be guilty in sinning against this great mercy of God in forgiveness of sin? I shall shew first *who they be* that cast dishonour on this great work of God; and Secondly, *Shew the greatness of thy sin*, what a dangerous thing it is to sin against this great work of God in pardoning sin.

Answ. 1. First, *They sin against this great work of God in pardoning sin that are altogether careless*, who little or nothing mind it, or scarce spend any time about it: there are a generation of men and women in the world, that have sin and guilt enough upon their spirits, yet they scarce ever call to mind, or question what are the terms between God and their own Souls, how things stand between God and them? what God hath to charge them withal? whether God hath any thing against them, yea or no? How few of you now this morning that are come into the presence of God, have had your thoughts working thus? *O my soul how is it with thee? How do matters stand betwixt God and thee? What guilt is it thou hast upon thy Spirit? What hath Divine Justice to charge thee withal? Conscience speak freely and fully: What is there in Heaven against me? Is there any thing upon Record that I am charged withal? How is it between God and me?* O what strangers are most men unto such thoughts as these! but go on in a sleepy, secure and dead hearted way, either they believe there is no guilt at all upon their spirits, or no great evil in that guilt, or else think 'tis no great matter for God to pardon. You are very solicitous for the flesh, *what you shall eat and drink, and what you shall put on*; and for your Estates, how to get and increase in the world: But to make up the Records between God and your Souls, to get them discharged, and the Records of Heaven cancelled that are against you: O how seldom do these things take up your thoughts? Know you that are of such careless spirits about this great matter of pardon of sin, that it is a great aggravation of your sin, that you are so careless about that great work of God in pardoning sin, you are careless and spend but a few thoughts about that, that hath (as I may so speak with holy reverence) taken up the heart of the infinite God from all eternity: certainly, there is not any in the world, not any of the works of God towards his creatures hath taken up the thoughts and heart

of God so much as this one work of the pardon of sin, and yet your thoughts are not taken up with it, you little mind it: certainly there is a great disproportion between your thoughts and Gods; whereas those that are godly, should labour to work as God works; and those things that hath taken up the heart of God, should take up their hearts; whereas those things that are even unworthy of an immortal Soul take up your thoughts, and those objects that take up the thoughts and heart of God about pardoning sin, your own Consciences can tell you is very little in your thoughts and hearts: Certainly my Brethren, were the thoughts of men and women taken up about this serious and great business of getting pardon of their sin, it would prevent and cure them of thousands of other vain, slight, foolish and wicked thoughts. There are, I suppose, many of you begin to be sensible of sin, and of the base wandring, filthy, unclean, and wicked thoughts of your hearts; and you say, O that we could but help our selves against these wandring, vile and wicked thoughts; surely this would be a great help, if you would get your thoughts possest with serious subjects, it would have a great deal of weight in it, to help you against those light and vain things your thoughts work about. Now of all subjects in the world, this is the most serious *about the grace of God; how his infinite wisdom hath wrought to reconcile himself to your souls, in the bringing about the pardon of sin, and making peace between himself and the Children of men.* Now if you would take up your thoughts about the great business of getting pardon of your sins, it would take off your thoughts from other things: Suppose a man have a vain, slight, wandring, foolish heart: yet if he were condemned to dye some dreadful tormenting death, his thoughts would quickly be taken off from other things, and taken up about using means, if there were any possibility to deliver himself from death. *Jerom* in one of his Epistles hath this Relation of one that was troubled with vile thoughts, & he, that he complained unto had this device, I name it not to approve it, but he had this device, he brought the man to have a charge of a crime laid against him, and caused him to be brought before a Judge, and put into Prison, and afterward he came to him, and askt him, How is it now with you? Does your vain thoughts still abide with you as they were

wont to do? he gave him this answer, saies he, *I cannot live, and what shall I now think of uncleanness and fornication? I am in danger of my life, and I have now no time to think of such things*; and that helpt and cured his thoughts: from this we may see, that if a soul was possest of the evil of sin, and the danger of condemnation, the necessity and great consequence of a pardon; what a mighty means would it be to take off your thoughts from other things, and turn them upon this; and certainly, who ever you are, whose thoughts are not mightily taken up about this great subject of the pardon of your sins, you *take the name of God in vain*, and do not *sanctifie him in this great work of his*; and know this, you that spend your dayes sleeping in security, your damnation sleeps and slumbers not; and untill your sin be pardoned, the infinite justice of God is working your doom, for the full satisfaction of it, that is the first thing they dishonour God in that go on in secure courses without minding such a great thing as the pardon of sin is.

Secondly, *Others dishonour God, who instead of making it their great business in this world to get their sin pardoned, they make it their great work to increase the guilt of sin*, by heaping up more and more guilt, and so make the flame greater, and add to it continually. You would think it a very unreasonable and desperate thing in a man, that being condemned to some grievous & dreadful death, yet there being a pardon propounded, and some possibility of it, & a friend for this very end get a Reprieval of the King for two or three days, that he might have time to sue out his Pardon, suppose such a thing: Now then, if this man in this time of Reprieval that is given for this very end, to seek a Pardon, should call for good cheer and musick, merriment and sporting, and not only so, but fall into railing against the Prince, increase his guilt, and provoke the Prince more and more against him, Would not every man say, this man is worthy of the greatest extream tormentingest death that could be devised? Nay, I suppose, should you hear of such an one condemned to die, and had his life given him for this very end, you would think, surely this man will spend these dayes in another manner than ever he spent his time before: you that would think so of such a man, it may be some of you, before the Lord this day, are guilty of the same evil, for this is a certain truth, that all the men in the world have been condemn'd

condemn'd to eternal death, and all the time of your life is given you for this very end, a few dayes that God gives you for this very purpose, meerly that you might have a little liberty to sue out your pardon, and make up your peace with God. O that men and women would but understand this, what they live for, that all the time of their lives is given them to make up their peace with God; you are to know it is given for this end, meerly as a Malefactor hath a Reprieve to get his Pardon, this is your very condition, you stand before the Lord guilty of eternal death, but God in his patience and long-sufferance gives you a few dayes to live to sue out your Pardon, and if you let this time slip, and these dayes be gone, I protest to you this day before the Lord, that mercy it self shall never save you: I would but know of many of you, how you spend these dayes? you are not certain of one day, it may be not an hour: Do you spend these dayes in making it the great business and work of your Souls to sue out a Pardon? Let me speak to you, and O that you would speak it in secret between God and your own Souls, and that you would answer in the Name of God every soul present, to this Question, *Soul hast thou made it the great work and business of thy life, above all things in the world, to sue out thy Pardon, and seek for Reconciliation with thy God, and a discharge of thy sins?* I verily fear that many of you that hear me this day, if we could but hear Conscience speak, would answer, What? I make it the great work and business of my life to sue out a Pardon? God knows it hath been the great work and business of my life to increase my guilt; there is not a day goes over my head, but I have brought more guilt upon my self by wicked Oaths, taking Gods Name in vain, neglecting his Worship, abusing of his creatures, perhaps by drunkenness or uncleanness; methinks your Consciences might misgive you, when you are so far from making it the great business of your lives to sue for pardon, that you make it your great work to increase your guilt; Dost thou think ever to get pardon of thy sin, so long as thou goest on to increase thy guilt, and make thy self more vile? the lives of many people are in such a course of wickedness, that it bespeaks them that either they are resolved to perish eternally in their sin, or else to make it to be as

great a burden to the mercy of God as can be in the pardoning of their sin; if it be so mighty a work of God to pardon sin, observe what I say, it follows from the point wherein I opened the wonderful work of God in pardoning any one sin, think thus, Is it so great a work of God to pardon one sin? Shall I go on then to add sin unto sin to make the work greater? Friend, if God pardon but one sin in thought that thou hast been guilty of in all thy life, it would be a work that would yield thee matter of praise to all eternity; and wilt thou be so desperate then as to add sin unto sin? As suppose a man had some grievous disease, and it would be the strangest work to cure him that ever was wrought since the Earth and Heavens were made, if this man should go on by intemperate courses, to increase the malignity and venom of it day by day more and more; what a desperate thing would this be esteemed in him, especially if he were in a possibility of cure; yea, and perhaps he could tell others, that there is some possibiliy, and yet he goes on to increase the malignity more and more; how would every one think this mans courses unreasonable? O that we would consider of the unreasonableness of the dealings of men with God; men are ashamed to be unreasonable in their dealings with men, but in their dealings with God, they are as unreasonable as can be imagined; you are guilty of many sins, have you hope to be forgiven? yes, you will say, you have hope; have you hope? if God deliver you from any of your sins, he must do such a work as is greater than the making of Heaven and Earth: what do you then to increase your sin, when it is so great a work to pardon your sin? O! the horrible wickedness of men and women to increase their sin. *Josh.* 22.17. I may allude unto it, and it is an argument of great force, *Is the iniquity of* Peor *too little, from which we are not cleansed to this day?* so I may say to sinners going on in their sins; *Is the iniquity of* Peor *too little, from which you are not cleansed to this day?* What, is the iniquity of your youth too little that you committed, and mis-spent your time when you were Prentice, or lived in such and such a family? Is that sin too little to magnifie the grace of God in pardoning of it, but that you must add more and more unto it, as if you would tempt God to try and see whether God would extend his mercy further and further? we tell

you

you in the Name of God, and say to you, the sins you have committed already are so grievous, that it must needs be a wonderful work of God to forgive them; and what, must you needs add more and more, and tempt God to extend his mercy further? Take heed of tempting God to extend his mercy further, for though God may be pleased to extend his mercy thus far; Who shall prescribe God how far he shall go? Who can tell but that the thoughts of God towards thee are thus, that he will go thus far to pardon thee, but if thou go on in sin, who can tell whether he will go on to pardon further? 'Tis true, when God comes to pardon, he will do them all away; but know thou that goest on to increase the guilt of thy sin, thou maist find it, as many thousands have found it a mighty hard thing, which hath cost them much anguish and distress of spirit, to get the pardon of their sin sealed in the Court of Conscience, though it was sealed before in Heaven; O the anguish of spirit it hath cost them! and dost thou still go on to heap up more and more sin, as if the pardon of thy sin was nothing? there is a great deal of reason in this, to cry to sinners to stop in the course of sin, for thou hast gone on enough already, go no further, that's a second abuse of the mercy of God in pardoning sin.

Thirdly, *They abuse the mercy of God that have extream slight thoughts of pardon of sin*, that think to have it at any time, when they will, 'tis but *repenting*, as it was said of *Lewis* the 11. King of *France*, *That he wore a Crucifix in his Hat, and when he had committed a sin, it was but taking it down and kissing of it, and all was well again*, so many Idolatrous Papists, they have as slight thoughts of pardon of sin as can be, if they commit a sin, they make no more of it, but go to a Priest to shrieve them, or kneel before a Crucifix and knock their breast, which is a thing soon done, and all's well again. Certainly 'tis a great dishonour to God, for any man to have slight thoughts of the pardon of sin: It is such a work as if ever any thing put God to it (as I may say) to pardon sin, and yet to salve his Justice, it was this work; and certainly, if ever God have love to thee, thou wilt change thy thoughts about this; and certainly, the slight thoughts men have about this, is the cause many times why they are held so long under the spirit of bondage; when God begins to work

upon

upon them, and stirs the Conscience, and layes the guilt of sin home upon it: how long are they before they can have any assurance of pardon? and in just judgement it is so, because they had slight thoughts before of the pardon of sin. I remember it is storied of *Pompey*, *when one of his Captains came to him, and told him he wanted men*; sayes he, *I can but stamp my foot upon the ground and bring forth so many men presently*; but when the Enemy came, this Captain came to him again, and said, where's your men now? but then he could not get them when he was in distress and had great need of them. As many think they can do great things with a word speaking, as if all must be at their beck presently, but when they come to it, they fall and find it otherwise; so many make it a small matter to get pardon of sin, they think to do it with a *Lord have mercy upon us*, at their death-bed, or the like; but when they come to it indeed, God makes them to know, *It is the greatest business that ever they had to do in all their lives*; there's nothing that God is so jealous of as his honor, and specially about this great work, and certainly, were it not that God is very jealous of his honour, and would cure the slight thoughts that men have of this great work; there needs never be so much humiliation and workings of the spirit of bondage; and certainly, did we but know the greatness of this work, how would sinners snatch at any opportunity or hint of Gods favour appearing to them? they would do as the servants of *Benhadad*, 1 King. 20. 33. *diligently observe if any thing would come from him, and hastily catch at it*, they watched that if any thing did come from him, that did make any way to that which they sought after, and did hastily catch at it; so, did a soul understand the pardon of sin, what a great work it is, he would be so far from having slight thoughts of it, that he would come cloathed in Sackcloth, and every Sermon would be watching and enquiring, what hath God spoke any word to my soul or no? And if any word fall from a Minister concerning this great business, such a soul would catch greedily at it, and lose no opportunity to embrace it. *Psal.* 32. is very remarkable to this purpose, *David* found it a very hard thing to get pardon of his own sin, *vers.* 4. and he acknowledged it, and God forgave him, *vers.* 5. what follows?

vers.

verſ. 6. *For this ſhall every one that is godly, pray unto thee in a time when thou maiſt be found*, as *David* in this language make thus, O all you poor ſinners, that ſin againſt God, think it an eaſie matter to get pardon of ſin; know, I have found it otherwiſe, it coſt me dear before I could get aſſurance of pardon; and therefore for this cauſe let every one that is acquainted with the wayes of God, ſeek to God in due time, and not put it off from time to time, for the boldneſs is not ſo ſlight to put it off: many abuſe the example of *David*, and think becauſe he ſinned, they may take liberty to ſin, but they conſider not what abundance of ſorrow it coſt him to get his pardon; it coſt him ſo much as that he tells them, *for this cauſe every one ſhall ſeek God in due time*: many think they may put it off till any time: but mark what *David* ſays, *For this cauſe every man that is godly ſhall ſeek thee in a time when thou maiſt be found*; he does not ſay, I have found mercy in the pardoning of my great ſins, and for this cauſe men ſhall be bold to put it off to any time; no, but for this cauſe thoſe that are godly, and have any acquaintance in the wayes of God, will ſeek God in a time that he may be found; and if thoſe that are godly, that have ſin pardoned in the Court of Heaven find ſo hard a matter of it to get it pardoned in their own Conſciences; how does it concern thee that perhaps haſt thy ſin neither pardoned in the Court of Heaven, nor in thy own Conſcience, *But art in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity*, how concerns it thee to look to it? that is a third ſort that abuſe the mercy of God *in having ſlight thoughts of the pardon of ſin.*

Fourthly, *Thoſe that ſeek for pardon but are inſenſible of the greatneſs of the work of God in pardoning* they do not put it off, but ſeek it for the preſent, but how? with extream unſenſibleneſs; they do not come before God with brokenneſs, trouble and contrition of ſpirit in ſeeking after pardon of ſin: many they repeat of their ſins before God, and have a gift of Prayer, it is that which would make a mans heart to tremble, to conſider how many have a great gift in Prayer, and will be praying half an hour, and will repeat abundance of their ſins, make Catalogues, and tell large ſtories of their ſins, bring in all the aggravations againſt them for their ſins; judge themſelves, and ſpeak mighty words

against them before for their sins, & yet all this while God knows with a desperate, dull, dead and senseless heart for their sins; it may be others that joyn with them, their hearts are broken with their expressions, and yet in the mean time thy Conscience may tell thee, thy heart is desperately hard before God, and not sensible at all of what thou speakest; thou wert putting up Petitions to God, and yet with as dull and senseless a spirit, as if thou were speaking of a matter of no consequence at all; this is a high degree of *taking the blessed Name of God in vain*; for we are to know, the Name of God in forgiveness of sin is a most glorious Name, and we had need to take heed how we speak to God in this business, that we take not his Name in vain, *for he will not hold him guiltless that takes his Name in vain*, we had need to look to the *sanctifying of Gods Name* in this thing; Many a man will think it of himself, that to swear and blaspheme is a taking of the Name of God in vain? and why is it so? because it is a sin against the third Commandment, *Thou shalt not take the Name of thy God in vain, &c.* for my part I cannot but think that to make large Confessions of sin, and yet with a senseless dead heart, is a high degree of taking the Name of God in vain; (mistake me not, if thy heart be sensible of thy unsensibleness, thou art not of those that *take the Name of God in vain*. God accepts of this, it is the rational part of the soul that is taken with this, and this is pleasing to him, though thou canst not bring the sensitive part of the soul up to this thing; but I speak it of those that have got a formality in crying and confessing of their sins, and yet are unsensible of them; yea, it may be, glory in this, that they can in the Church thus speak of their sins, and have such expressions before the Lord; take heed of this, if you would shew your parts and abilities, let it be in something else, and not to come before the holy God, and before others in a holy duty to vent your parts and abilities there; it is a dangerous thing for any to meddle so in this kind, *Heb.* 9. 22. as he says there, *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, so I may say without the blood of thy heart, without the bleeding of thy heart there is no remission, or at least a being sensible of thy unsensibleness; if thou canst not *mourn*, then *mourn* that thou canst not *mourn*, be sensible of thy unsensibleness, and then

God

God may accept of [illegible] without this kind of *blood there is no remission*; [illegible] of God, consider this thing, it may be of two sorts, either to sanctifie the Name of God, when there comes to be in my heart a disposition suitable to the work of God I have to deal withal; suitable to the manifestation of God in that thing I have to deal with God in: if any ask, *What is it to sanctifie Gods Name*, I would answer thus, *To sanctifie Gods Name in any thing, it is to labour to get an answerable disposition to that thing that I have to deal with God in*; when I am to deal with God in any work, according to that work I must have disposition in my heart suitable to it; as to instance, I sanctifie Gods Name in Prayer, when I speak of Gods glorious Attributes and Rules then, when there is an answerable disposition in my heart to those glorious Rules that I speak of; so I sanctifie Gods Name when I confess my sin before God the Judge of all the World, in having an answerable disposition in my heart suitable to this Judge; and then I sanctifie Gods Name in seeking pardon of sin, when I have an answerable disposition in my heart to the greatness of the work of God in pardoning sin; therefore all of you must be careful, when you interest God to pardon sin, to interest him also to sanctifie his Name; How is that? interest God to manifest that glorious work to your soule, and then labour to get your hearts into an answerable disposition suitable to that great work; you that go to God every day in seeking pardon of sin, have you been apprehensive of the greatness of it; Hath God shewed you the greatness of his work in it? or further, since the time that you have heard of the greatness of the work, have you been casting in your souls how to get an answerable disposition suitable to these Divine Truths? Certainly, so far as you are wanting in that, so far you are short of sanctifying Gods Name, and for time to come, this must be the great work of your souls, to get answerable dispositions in seeking pardon of sin, that may be suitable to the great work of God in it; if one that comes to seek to you, to Petition you to remove some evil one that hath offended you, if he come slightly, you will say, you must come after another manner; shall a poor man or woman expect such a kind of coming from a Child, Servant, or Inferiour; and yet

shall be of the [illegible] way to God in seeking pardon of sin, and those [illegible] you go about it carnestly, and your hearts are not [illegible] when Christ came he was sensible of it, in seeking to God about this business, *Heb. 5. 7.* — *In the dayes of his flesh, observe Christ in the dayes of his flesh, did offer up Prayers and Supplications*; How? *with strong cryings and tears.* What? shall Christ be so sensible of the weight and burden of sin, when he was to suffer, that he should seek the Father with such Prayers? if he had said but one word, it had been a Prayer; but he sought him with Prayers, and Prayers with cries and supplications; and not only so, but with strong cries and tears: let thy heart be rebuked this day for the senselessness of it, in going to God in such a slight manner in seeking pardon of thy sins.

Fifthly, *Those are to be rebuked that in seeking pardon of sin, do indeed but dally with God and trifle with him*; they are not at all serious in it; wherein if there be any business in the world, wherein we had need to be serious, 'tis in this. But you will say, *Who are they?* there are *four or five sorts* that do but dally with God in seeking pardon of sin.

Quest.

Answ.

1. *Those that cry, and seem to be very earnest with God in crying to him for pardon, and yet still continue in love to their sins; and abide in the practice of them* in an ordinary course and way; I do not speak of those that seek truly for the pardon of their sins, and yet may sometimes be overtaken with them again, but I speak of the common course of People, they come to God and intreat him to forgive them, and yet continue still in them. I speak not of those that are senseless in the acts of Confession of their sins, but of those that cry mightily unto God for pardon, and yet live in the practice of those sins they cry to God for pardon of: as for instance, consider every one of you what sins have been in your course of life; I put this to you, either you have prayed to God to forgive them, or you have not prayed; if you have not prayed, then you are most horrible Atheists; but I thank God, I pray every day: Well, you pray to God for forgiveness of sin, and yet live in it daily: O how do people thus dally with God; pray against sin, and yet commit sin, and fall into it again; pray again, and commit it again, and this is the very way that

that many people who ; when they draw out the thread of their lives, and spend out their day of Salvation in trifling with God ; they pray that God would be merciful to them in forgiving their sin, and yet go on to commit sin ; *they do not think what a strong ingagement against sin Praying is* ; I beseech you note it, every one of you that pray against any sin, every Prayer that makest for pardon of sin is a mighty strong ingagement from God to you to take heed of sin afterwards, may be you have not thought of this ; you say you pray every morning, consider what you do, if you have any care of your souls, you will not rest meerly in such a form as your Fathers and Mothers have taught you ; but if you have any care of your souls, you will consider in Prayer to God, & say, Lord I am guilty of such and such sins, such sins my nature is most prone unto, and such sins I have lately committed ; well, I will humble my soul before God in Prayer, and intreat God to forgive me ; 'tis not Prayer to mumble over a few words, this is to *prate* and not to *pray* : but when you solemnly set your selves to examine your own hearts what you are guilty of, and protest against your sins solemnly in the presence of God, and say, Lord this and this particular sin I am guilty of ; Lord I was drawn to such and such sins the day before in such and such company, O Lord forgive my sin, and forgive me these and these particular sins ; this is the way to seek pardon of sin aright : Do you do so ? this will be a mighty bond upon your hearts to think thus within your selves ; *Lord, What have I been setting my self solemnly in the presence of the Almighty to confess my sins, and prayed him to forgive them ; what care have I need to take that I fall not into the same sin again ?* Thou that hast come this day, and confest and prayed against thy sin, do not fall into it again, you that are apt to break out into passion, when you find your selves begin to wax hot, if you would but take so much liberty as to bethink your selves, that you have been praying to God this morning to forgive such a Passion : it would be of mighty concernment to help you from going on in Passion, or any other sin, to consider that you have been praying to God for pardon and forgiveness of it ; you that do not consider this, but confess your sins in the morning, and then go on again to commit sin : you make more work for the next time : you

come to confess sin, as in Solemn Prayer of Humiliation, men will rip up all their sins, but before another day come, they have made work for another and another day; and this is the reason when men come to confess their sins before God, of their trifling with him, and were it not that God is a God of infinite patience, he could not bear it; might not he say to you, you came seven years ago, and told me of your Pride, Passion, Earthly-mindedness, and the like, and do you now come and tell me the same again? were not God infinitely patient, he could never bear this dallying with him. Or the truth is, it is nothing else but infinite dallying with God. Jer. 3.5. *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth?* they seemed to cry to God, O thou art my Father and the guide of my youth, there are but these words named, but it is like they opened their sins before God, and cryed for mercy; O saies God unto them, *Thou hast spoken, and cryed out of the Anger of mine that is gone out against you for your sins, and yet thou hast spoken and done evil as thou couldst*; this is an evil thing, and heavy to be laid to the charge of any man, to confess sin, and pray for pardon, and yet commit it again; know this day you that have been confessing sin, and yet go on in sin; know this thing, I tell you it is but dallying with God: many men and women do ravel out their Prayers this way; they make excellent Prayers, and when they have done they ravel all again by falling into the same sin.

2. *A second sort are those that seek earnestly the pardon of some sins, and yet still keep the love of some other sin*, and yet think to obtain pardon of them, this is but dallying and trifling with God about this business; you never set your selves yet seriously about it; when you cry against some sins that are against the Light of Nature, and it may be your Consciences fly in your faces, and the Word of God hath stricken you for them; but there is some other secret haunts of villanies, that your hearts close withal, and yet you think to obtain of God forgiveness of the other, and go on there: O thou vain fool, thou vain man, know that though thou shouldst cry thy heart out for the forgiveness of one or more sins, yet if thy heart secretly close with some other sin that thou hast secret haunts after, the bonds of the guilt of that sin will hold thy soul in chains eternally, except

thy

thy soul be rent from that sin as well as from any other, thou understandest not the way of God in the dispensing of his grace to the soul, if thou thinkest God will pardon some sins, and give thee liberty in others: thou foolish soul, know that when thou goest to God for pardon of sin, thou must go with a heart resigned up from every sin, or else thou loosest all thy labour, and art held in the chains of them all.

3. *Those that never look after their Prayers to call it into Question what answer they have had*, I have prayed to God, but have I got any answer in my own heart, or hath God come in, in any Ordinance, and sealed to me my pardon? thus the soul should look after pardon in Prayer, and all other means; Many pray, but never look after their Prayers whether God hear or no, Psal. 85. 8. *I will hear and hearken what the Lord God will speak*, thus the Psalmist, and thus it would be with thee, if thou didst not dally with God, after thou hast cryed for pardon, thou wouldst be listning at Heavens gates, and looking towards God: What answer doth God give? I have prayed and there comes no answer, the soul that sets it self in a solid and serious way to seek for pardon, will be often looking out, and remain much troubled till an answer come: Many cry for pardon, but are not troubled till God give answer, they deal with God as *Pilate* did with *Christ*, askt him *What is Truth?* but never stayed to have an answer, but went his way: so we do but dally with God in our Prayers and Petitions, when we ask for forgiveness of sin, and neglect to look after an answer.

4. *As those that look not after the answer of their Prayers dally with God, so those that follow not their Prayers with answerable indeavours*: they Petition that God would be merciful unto them, but what are the indeavours of your souls after your Petitioning? if there be not indeavours to attend upon the means of grace that God uses to speak peace to souls in, all your Prayers are nothing; but of this I shall speak afterwards, you are to search into the Covenant, and enquire after the Saints what course they have taken, and what means they have used to obtain pardon.

5. *Those that pray for pardon, yet are satisfied with other things*; as thus, they pray for pardon, but if the world come in they are satisfied

satisfied and quieted with that, as a Child that hath a piece of Gold given him and an Apple, he will be still'd with the Apple; so many men sue to God for this great work of pardon of sin, but let God give them health and accommodations in the world, they are satisfied and contented with them, and little or never seek after the pardon of their sin; that is a fifth sort that are charged this day before the Lord that do but dally with God about seeking pardon for their sins.

Sixthly, *They that are quiet upon weak and slight Evidences dishonour God*; certainly they have not those high thoughts of the mercy of God in pardoning sin, that content themselves with poor Evidences about it as most do; come to many people, and ask them, What? you hope that God will pardon your sins; yes we do hope, but upon the poorest Evidences imaginable: those Evidences they lay the weight of the pardon of their sins upon, are such broken reeds that it would make a man amazed, that understands what the worth of a poor soul is, that they should venture so great a thing on so slight a reed; What is the reason? because they have but slight thoughts of the forgiveness of sin: that, that a man puts a high valuation of, he will make sure, but that which he slights, he is not so intense in; as to instance, if one give you in payment Silver, Gold and Farthings, you take the Farthings and do not tell them, but you tell the Silver, and the Gold you not only tell it, but weigh it too; What is the reason? because you little esteem of the Brass, and so will not tell it, you more esteem the Silver, and therefore tell that; but the Gold you not only tell, but weigh it, because you have a greater esteem of that than the other; this is an argument, may convince the men of the world, that their esteem of earthly things is more than of Heaven and their souls; because they labour to make earthly things more sure than the things of Heaven; a worldly man to make sure his Estate will have Bond upon Bond, and Seal upon Seal, and carry his Evidences to Counsellors, and say, I beseech you Sirs, see whether there be not some flaw in them, I shall lose all my money if there be but a crack in my Evidences: he is mighty careful of this, because he hath such a high esteem of his worldly concerns. But how does it appear that men have but poor low thoughts

about

about the pardon of their sins, because they content themselves with such poor mean Evidences; for had they a high esteem of it, they would labour to make pardon of sin surer than any thing in the world. To wind up all, those that know what pardon of sin is; how do they spend their time, and lay out themselves to get assurance? Take this one note, *Because God sees those that are his own people understand what forgiveness is, have a high esteem of it, and are very solicitous about it, he condescends in his kindness to assure them by all sorts of ways and means*; methinks God deals with them in this manner, the poor soul stands shaking and trembling, crying out, Oh! that I might have my sins forgiven, and have assurance of it; Why, says God, what way do you take to make things sure from one to another? say you, first we give our word one to another, says God, you shall have that, I give you my Word. What have you else? Secondly, say you, we cause it to be written, well says God, you shall have it written, and this is a great mercy, the Covenant of grace is written; we have it not from hand to hand, as our fore-fathers had: What do you else require? Thirdly, you say to have witnesses, well, says God, you shall have witnesses, in things between man and man, *In the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is established*, Matth. 10.16. Now God in reconciling a Soul to himself, brings no less than *six witnesses* to confirm a Believer in assurance of his grace and favour to him, 1 Jo. 5.7,8. *There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and three that bear witness on Earth, the Spirit, Water, and Blood*, three in Heaven, and three on Earth to assure thee of forgiveness of sin, that is a third way? Is there any other way; yea Lord, Fourthly, we use not only to have a word, and this word put in writing, and witnesses affixed to it, but we use to take an Oath: Well, says God, I will swear and take an Oath, to make my Covenant of grace sure to your souls *Heb.* 6.13. when God made a Promise to *Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*, and this is *ver.* 18. (an admirable Text of Scripture) *That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us*; there is hope of Gods grace through the Reconciliation of Christ Jesus, and this hope the soul runs to as to a City of Refuge, when his guilt, like the pursuer of blood

1. The Word.

2. Writing.

3. Witnesses.

4. Oath.

follows him. Well, says God, this poor soul notwithstanding will have doubts of my grace; now that it might have strong consolation, I have swore that I might make my mercy sure to such a soul, that's a fourth way: but is there any thing else? you use to make things sure between one another. Yea Lord, Fourthly, we put our Seals to it, an Oath taken may soon pass over, but a Seal that abides: says God, I will do that too, I will give you Seals, and there are divers sorts of Seals; there's first the Broad Seal of Heaven. What is that? that is nothing else, but the very Printing of the Image of God on the Soul, that is the Broad Seal of Heaven. And as the Broad Seal of *England*, hath the Picture or Image of the King stampt upon it, so the Broad Seal of Heaven is nothing else but the Image of God stampt or imprinted on the Soul. 2. *There is the Privy Seal of the Holy Spirit of God*, which is the perswading and assuring of the soul of its interest it hath in Christ and God the Father. In 2 *Tim.*2.19. you have Gods Privy Seal, *The Lord knows them that are his*, and they having his Privy Seal know themselves to be the Lords, Cant. 6. 2. *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*; so *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20. being sealed with this Seal, faith of Christ, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*; he was perswaded and assured of salvation, 2 *Tim.*1.12. *Rom.*8.38,39. This Privy Sealing is like the *New Name*, Revel. 2. 17. *Which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* And to this you shall have a *third Seal, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord*, that is, to assure you, that the end of the Sacrament is to Seal up Pardon of sin; God saw that his People would be very solicitous, and therefore added all these wayes of assurance to them; when you therefore come to the Sacrament, you should come with a sense upon your souls of the great need you have of the grace of God in pardoning sin, and come to it as to a Sealing-day, you have many fears and doubts; come so as that you may have the grace of pardon seal'd to your souls, take heed of coming so as to have your condemnation seal'd: for certainly, all Ordinances if they work not for that end, that they are appointed, they turn to another and quite contrary; as the Word, if it be not the savour of life, it is the savour of death; and so the Sacraments, if they seal not the pardon of thy sins up unto thee, they seal up the sentence

5. Seal.

of

of death and condemnation; therefore look to it, as oft as you come unworthily to the Sacrament, you have so many Seals of death and condemnation set upon your souls: Take heed you do not come to take another Seal of death; 'tis much to be feared many in this place come to take the seal of eternal death upon their souls: but those that come worthily, though administrations be not in that due order as they should, yet God may be present with his own Ordinance to give them comfort from it, and help their Evidences by it, I must conclude this: those that content themselves with slight Evidences about this great work, dishonour the grace of God: you would have us preach of mercy, and indeed it is a blessed Argument, which our souls delight much to be preaching of, because we find so much sweetness in it, and for which our souls shall expatiate themselves in glorifying God to all eternity; but we are withal jealous of your dishonouring of God in this mercy, and therefore it is that we labour so with you, after the laying open of this mercy, that you may not abuse it: for certainly my Brethren, there is nothing in the world God takes to heart more, than the *dishonour that is done to his pardoning mercy*; and nothing more aggravate the sin of People than to have slight thoughts of this great work.

Seventhly, *This is a great dishonor to Gods pardoning mercy, for men to put off the seeking of it to the worst time that possible can be*; Is it not the ordinary way of most people, to put off the seeking of the grace and favour of God, Pardon of sin, and Reconciliation, till the time of sickness, and the time of death? they go on all their life-time in sinning against God; but when they are lying upon their sick-beds and death-beds, Lord have mercy upon me, pardon me, forgive me, a wicked wretch that I have been; these kind of words we hear from men at that time: O that God would forgive and pardon such and such sins, and then perhaps they will tell some particular sins if they think they shall die, they will open themselves to the Minister, or to some faithful Neighbour, in the disclosing of their particular sins, and beseech them to pray to God for mercy; but if they have any hopes to escape, they will keep them in, and be loth to rip open the sins of their lives: This I say, for any to put off

the seeking unto God for his pardoning grace till that time, it is to put a great dishonour upon God, for it is a putting of it off to the worst time that possibly can be. And that makes much to the dishonour of God; For

First, *Those men seek pardon of sin, when sin is leaving them, or they must leave sin whether they will or no*; when you have served your own turn of sin, after you have had as much supposed pleasure as you can, then you think to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin; what is there but a meer selfish spirit in seeking God now, and God sees it so; it is not seeking after pardon of sin that you may honour God in his infinite grace, for then you would seek after it now, and the honour of God would be dear to you now; but you seek it at such a time meerly out of respect to your selves, this is a great dishonour to God, *It is the first born of Gods glory to pardon sin*; and for God to see men and women have no higher ends in seeking pardoning grace, but meerly to save their own skins; How may God look upon them with disdain? What shall I magnifie the riches of my grace so wonderfully in this work of my pardoning mercy? And shall my creatures seek after it for no other end, nor higher aims, but meerly to save their own skins? you bring down the grace of God, that that is the top of his infinite Majesty and Glory you put to a low and base end; therefore put not off seeking it to the last, *'tis a great dishonour to his grace.*

2. *It is the worst time, because you come to seek after pardoning grace when it is the time of Gods wrath*, Prov. 11. 4. the time of affliction, and trouble, sickness, and death, is call'd *the day of wrath*; Riches avail not in the day *of Gods wrath*, Riches avail for comfort at present, but in the day of wrath they will not; God hath his day of affliction, and his day of wrath, he hath his time to come to visit men for their sins: Now then, for people to come to seek to have the pardon of their sins when Gods time *is to visit for sin*, that must needs be the worst time that possibly can be. I reason thus, and consider of it, if God does deny his mercy in the day of mercy, is it likely, that he will grant mercy in the day of wrath? while you are alive, and have liberty, health and opportunity to come to hear the Doctrine of

the justification of a sinner, and forgiveness of sin opened, you are to know it is the day of Gods grace; *Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation and of grace*; when God gives liberty and opportunity, thus to have the mysteries of the Gospel opened unto you, this is the day of Gods grace: Now if God deny you grace in this day of mercy, that you are not so much as inlightned, your souls melted and your hearts stirred; Do you think that now you are upon your sick-beds or death-beds, which is a day of wrath unto you; for so it is to those that have not their sins pardoned before, it is a day of wrath, and Gods time of visiting for sin; Is it likely that God will now shew thee mercy? I beseech you consider, the usual way of Gods working on men is according to his Ordinance: Now the ordinary way of Gods conveying grace is by the Ministry of the Word; Did God ever appoint any other way to convey Christ and grace to thy Soul? give me a Text for it; Where do you find a Text in Scripture of any other way as an Ordinance appointed by God for the conveying of his pardoning grace in Christ to any Soul? No, it is in the Ministry of the Gospel, and by faith that lays hold of the pardoning grace of God, by coming to hear the Word preached; Now if God come not in that time to work upon thee, and to bestow mercy in his own appointed way, it is not likely he will come any other way: I remember in a Treatise of Mr. *Bolton's*, he has this expression, *Let any one give me an example, that ever any one that lived under a powerful Ministry, and not savingly wrought upon that way, was ever wrought upon any other way*; many he says may be stirred, but for his part he knew none that was so stirred by affliction to the conversion of their souls, if God had not before in the Ordinances of grace wrought upon them: then it must needs be the worst time that can be to seek pardon of sin in a day of trouble or affliction, because that is usually a time of Gods wrath visiting for sin.

3. *The work of the Soul in seeking after Gods pardoning mercy, and applying of it to himself, as it is the excellentest work that ever a creature did perform, so it does require the most exquisite work of the Spirit that ever was required*, or that ever any creature was [illegible]; it is the most intensive work of the spirit of

man, the applying of the grace of God in Christ, and the closing with it for Justification, it is the highest, most exquisite, most glorious and most admirable work of the spirit of man that ever was in the world, and it requires the greatest intensness and strength of a mans spirit that ever any work did: Now then to put this off till such a time as a mans strength is gone, and he through diseases unfit for any thing, and when as all the strength he hath will be little enough to help him to bear his pain, this must needs be the worst time, you are mistaken if you think the applying of Gods mercy in Christ is but in saying *Lord have mercy upon me*; No, it is Gods putting the heart of man to do the most glorious work that hath the greatest operation in it that ever he did. I remember it related of one that lived wickedly, and divers sought to reclaim him, says he, come when I am upon my sick-bed, that is time enough; and afterwards he being sick, was put in mind of it; you said you would do it then; but then he swore a great Oath, saying, What is this a time to repent in? because he then felt so much trouble and anguish that took up his thoughts, that he was stirr'd with indignation to be put upon repenting then, in a time when he felt so much dolour of spirit, by the pains that were upon him; Is this a time to repent in? if that be not, then do it betimes.

4. *It is the worst time, because God shall lose a great part of his end in pardoning sin*; for when God pardons sin it is to this end, that his poor creatures might honour and worship him in this world, and do him service; but now to seek for Gods pardoning grace when thou canst do him no more service in this world; How canst thou think that he will accept thee then? *He came to redeem us, that we might serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives*; and he knows there is no such way to ingage the heart of man to serve him as pardoning grace; for when once a soul sees it self delivered from those Enemies of sin and of the Law that would destroy him, his heart will be mightily set to honour God and serve him in holiness and righteousness all his days; and therefore to seek for pardon when thou canst do God no more service in this [illegible], must needs be the worst time; for how knowest thou [illegible] he will accept thee then? I beseech you observe one [illegible] Scripture

that is abused by many people, for I suppose that I am speaking to a great many very ignorant in the ways of God, and therefore I desire to speak plainly unto you, there is one place, though misapprehended and mistaken, that is the main prop of many carnal hearts; as it is read in some Books; *At what time soever a sinner repents*, &c. I know no such Text of Scripture; it is true, there are Scriptures tending that way that do not limit the time; but no Scripture does expresse it so: many people run away with that expression, as if it were so, there is no Text of Scripture hath those words, there is one Text of Scripture this is taken out of, but that is spoken to another end, and therefore you had need to examine what is spoken, 'tis *Ezek.* 18. 21. this comes the neareſt to those words, mark this Scripture, and see what you can have from thence to defer the seeking of Gods pardoning mercy and grace till sickness and death; *But if the wicked shall turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die*; here this Scripture does not limit a time, though it says not, At what time soever; it says if he *turn from all his sins, and keep all my Statutes, and do that that is lawful and right*; so that this Scripture promises mercy to one that turns from all his sins, and will keep all Gods Statutes, and so do all that is lawful and right: But now, if you put it off to the time of sickness and death, How can you do all this? *Turn from all sin and keep all Gods Statutes then*, or, How can you *do that is lawful and right* then? it must be then when you can keep all Gods Statutes, as well as turn from all your sins; so that if you take all together, there is not so much encouragement to that which is so frequent in your mouths; *At what time soever a sinner repents*, it must be at such a time as that you must keep all Gods Statutes: but further, God speaks here to the Jews according to the condition of the Covenant of works, because they made account to be justified by the Law, says God you will put it off, and think at last to turn from your wicked ways, and that I will have mercy on you; I, but look to it, if you will repent, it must be such a repentance as must be joyned with *keeping all my Statutes*; therefore those that do not understand the way of the Gospel, but depend upon a repentance on their death-

death-beds, God will hold you to this Scripture, that you must repent at such a time as that you must keep all Gods Statutes, then you see, this is the worst time of all, to defer repentance till your sick-beds or death-beds; for how can you keep all *Gods Statutes then, and do all that is lawful and right then?*

5. *It is the worst time, because all the rag-rag, all the basest and vilest wretches in the world will come in then*; And what hast thou no other spirit, but to defer coming in till then? Hast thou no more care of thy soul, no more love to God and his ways, but to put it off till such a time, as all the abominable wretches in the world will come in? That is the seventh way in dishonouring the pardoning grace of God, *by seeking it in the worst time that possibly can be.*

8. *The Eighth way of dishonouring the pardoning grace of God, and the most considerable of all, is the seeking and expecting of it any other way, but only through the Mediation of the Son of God*; I told you in the opening of the glorious mysteries of pardoning grace, that it must be done by a Mediator: Now, not only gross ignorant people, but many others dishonour the pardoning grace of God, they are not sensible of this: that it is such grace that only comes through the Mediation of the Son of God: We have too low thoughts of the pardoning grace of God, if we do think there is a possibility of attaining it any other way than by the mediation of him, that is God-Man: If we think our crying to God at any time will do it, or our roaring out in anguish of spirit, forty, fifty, or sixty years is enough to do it: or that there is any thing to attain it by, under the mediation of the Son of God, we have too low thoughts of the pardoning grace of God, we give not God that honour that is due unto it. *Luther* has a notable expression to this purpose, *It is a horrible blasphemy if you presume to pacifie God by any works*, 'tis an excellent speech; so I say, 'tis horrible blasphemy and intolerable to think to have any thing in the least of your own, to presume upon that God will be pacified with it, whereas God cannot be pacified by any other means, than by the infinite price of the Death and Blood of his own Son; one drop of which is more precious, than all the creatures of Heaven and Earth; God will say, Have I revealed such a way of being reconciled with my Creatures,

and

and that at such a rate and infinite price as the death of any own Son? Shall his life and blood go to procure pardon (one drop of which is more worth than ten thousand worlds) and when all this is done, shall any creature think to put me off by a poor work of their own prayers, tears, good meaning, or the like; or with the most glorious work that they can perform? for the greatest and most glorious work that they can perform is not near worth so much as one drop of the blood of Christ. And if you have not such high thoughts of Gods Pardoning Mercy, that it must be procured by that which hath more worth in it than all the Creation besides, you do dishonour it, by having such low thoughts of it, when as you think to obtain it by any duty that you can do, you think God is a merciful God, and you hope upon your reforming and performing duties of Obedience, that God will be pacified towards you for all that is amiss: Certainly when you have these thoughts of Gods pardoning grace, you make it to be but as common and ordinary pity towards one in misery; but the grace of God is a higher thing than common pity and compassion, and it is a mighty dishonour to God to have no higher thoughts of it, that you think of it but as of common pity and compassion, that one creature hath unto another; or if you think it differs from that pity one creature hath to another, it is but a difference in degrees; only you you think it is a little higher in degree but you must look upon it in another way, and as another kind of pity than one creature bears to another; it is true, Gods pardoning his poor creatures is in pity and compassion, but it is through the death and satisfaction of his own Son; and if you think to procure it any other way than by the mediation of the Son of God, you look upon it but in a natural way, as nature will dictate unto you; for nature will dictate, that the beholding of one crying out in misery will move pity and compassion, and you go no further; But you are to know, the pardoning grace of God, is the most supernatural and mysterious thing in all the Book of God; therefore when God works in us, we must act faith upon it in a mystical way, or act faith upon it as a great mysterie; and therefore you that

have been made sensible of sin, it may be you have thought of Gods grace for the pardon and forgiveness of your sins, and for to quiet the trouble of your spirits; Have you done that? there is I suppose many a poor soul may say, I have been often with God when no eye saw me, but only Gods, seeking the pardon of my sin in trouble of spirit; you have done so: but has your eye at that time been fastened, on the Son of God, as the great Mediator between God and Man, to intercede to God the Father for the obtaining this mercy, by making satisfaction to infinite Justice? Together with your cries for pardon, have your eyes been upon the Son of God at the right hand of the Father, pleading for man? Have your hearts been taken with the great mysteries of godliness, and wrought upon by the infinite grace of God? Have you put forth a mighty power of the Spirit of Faith, to render up to God the Father the Attonement that his Son has made by his blood and death for your sins? Have you seen that the pardoning grace of God is so high, that it is impossible to be reach'd unto by any thing you can do, but only by the mediation of the Son of God? If it have been thus with your spirits, then you have somewhat of the sense of the great work of God in this thing, but otherwise, though you have been never so much wrought on and have had floods of sorrow, and have cryed never so earnest for the pardon of your sins, yet except you have had some such kind of thoughts of Gods grace, as these are, upon your hearts, working after God this way, you were never throughly acquainted with the way of Gods pardoning grace, and so you have dishonoured him, by having too low thoughts of it, except your hearts have been raised to this height, *Psal.* 51. 7. in that time when *David* was on repenting, he called unto God to *purge him with Hysop*: *David* desired the renewing of the assurance of Gods mercy in Christ, in the pardoning of that horrible offence he had committed, and therefore he prays that he may be purged with Hysop: What is the meaning of that? there is a great mystery in it, in the time of the Law when the blood was sprinkled, it was done with a bunch of Hysop, and it was a Type of the Blood of Christ that was

to make an Atonement, Levit. 14. *They were to take a bunch of Hyssop, to sprinkle withal*; Now says *David*, *Purge me with Hyssop*, that is, apply to me the blood of Christ, for I have need of fresh applications of the blood of Christ, I have sinned against him, and have done what in me lay to bring my self under Gods wrath, and have brought new guilt upon my soul; Now for the assurance of thy love to me, let there be fresh applications of the blood of thy Son, let there be a new sprinkling of the blood of thy Son upon me: I suppose many of you in reading this place, did not think of the meaning of the Spirit of God in it, that may be a great help unto you, when at any time you are seeking the pardon of your sins, to cry to God to be purged with Hyssop, *O Lord sprinkle the blood of Christ afresh upon me, for I know that all my Prayers and Tears, and all that I can do, cannot purge me from the guilt of that sin I have committed against thee, except thou purge me with Hyssop; that is, by applying of the Blood of thy Son unto me*: And this is the Eighth way of dishonouring the grace of God, *in seeking for it any other way than through the blood of his Son*; and remember when you are seeking it, that it may be the last time, and therefore remember you look up to God for it in, by, and through the death of his Son; for otherwise, though you are never so earnest in Prayer, you dishonour this grace: It is an easie matter to convince men and women, that they are guilty of dishonouring the grace of God, if they seek for pardon in a negligent and sluggish way; but now, though you are never so sensible, and put forth never so much strength in seeking for it, yet you dishonour God, except you look upon it as such a high thing that can never be reach'd unto, but through the mediation of the Son of God.

9. *The ninth way of dishonouring the grace of God, is for any one to venture on sin the rather because they hope they shall be pardoned*, that dare to venture on sin on that ground, hoping that God will at last pardon them. I spake before of those that did nothing else but increase their sins instead of seeking pardon of sin, and of the miserable sad condition of such: But those we now speak of, are not such as are come to this height

of sinning, to do nothing else but increase their sins; but such men and women who being convinced of sin, and if they were perswaded that God would never pardon that sin, they would find knots enough to stop them from the commission of it: but because they have some hopes that God will pardon, therefore on that very ground they venture on sin; 'tis true, it is an offence, but God is a merciful God, he will forgive though it be an evil: there is more evil and mischief in this than thou can'st imagin; What, art thou convinc'd of sin, and wilt thou venture on sin meerly on this ground, because thou hopest that God will pardon thee? I may say unto thee as *Peter* unto *Simon Magus*, Act. 8. 22. *Pray, O pray to God, that if it be possible, this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*: for this thought of thy heart hath so much malignity in it, and is so great a provocation against God as possible can be imagined (except the sin against the Holy Ghost,) for any man or woman to venture on any sin in hopes of pardon: some will say, What need we be so strict, and trouble our selves so much? God is merciful, and therefore they think upon that ground, they need not be so strict; this is a horrible degree of *turning the grace of God into wantonness*, Jude 4. the Apostle speaks of such there, that profest they did believe in Christ, mark what he says of them, *There are certain men crept in unawares, — ungodly men turning the grace of God into wantonness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*; 'tis a most dreadful place; if there be any one in the Congregation that have ever had the glorious light of the Gospel revealed to them, that can reason thus? I do such and such things, yet God is merciful; O that God would convince thee of this evil, give me leave to open it unto you, how men creep in; they were Christians, and were come into the Church: but how? they crept in cunningly; the Saints of God were not aware of them, they crept in amongst them. Here by the way, we may take notice, that in a Church there ought to be none admitted Members, but such as there may be some testimony of godliness in them; for if any be ungodly, they are such as creep in unawares; the Church of God should keep them

them out, such as creep in unawares should be kept out. Many cry out, they will not have communion with any Church, because there are some wicked men in it; and others say, while there is a Church on Earth, the tares will be among the corn, and chaff will be among the wheat: be not deceived, I know none in the world that does think there is any Congregation so pure, but that some ungodly one may creep into it: but consider, to have some evil ones in the Church is one thing, and the Church to have power to cast them out, that is another thing; 'tis true, they will creep into the Church, but when they are crept in, and appear to be ungodly ones, we must do our duty; tell them of their faults, and if they will not hear us, we must tell it to the Church; and if the Church have power and will not deal with them, it need not at all hinder our communicating with them: but here lies the case, Whether we should withdraw, because evil ones are among them? or, Whether we can joyn with that Church wherein there is no power to keep them out, and after they are crept in to cast them out? they will creep into the Church, they came in unawares; but the state of the Church should be such, that they should suffer no evil men to come in, and if they do come in, it is unawares to the Church, by making a Profession of Religion: for the Church can go no further than what does outwardly appear unto them: if men make a Profession of Religion, and have a conversation agreeable to it, the Church can go no further; but for a Church to admit all, if they be no swearers, no adulterers, or gross livers in any other sin, although they make no Profession; nay, if they do but hire a House in the Parish, it is enough to make them members of the Church, and when they are in, there is no power to cast them out; and if a power heretofore, the remedy was worse than the disease, it was such a power as was never ordained of God: Whether we should joyn with such a Church or no, or whether we should withdraw, because there is some evil ones among them, is questionable? surely none can imagine there should be such a pure Church in the world, as that there should be no tares among them; But if there be a power in every Church to admit of none

but such as have an appearance of godliness, and if after being crept in, they proving otherwise, that there is a power to cast them out; let these things be granted, and then though many ungodly ones will unawares creep in, yet it is no hinderance at all to joyn with them in all the Ordinances of God: that is the first thing said of them, *they creep in.* 2. He says they were such *as were ordained of old to condemnation*; those that turn this grace of God into wantonness; that is, abuse this pardoning grace of God by taking liberty to sin; surely they are such as should be kept out of the Church, and if they creep in, they should not be accounted members, but should be cast out, when they appear to be such as were of old ordain'd to condemnation: then those that abuse the grace of God to wantonness, and think they may take liberty to sin because God is merciful to forgive sin, the Scripture says, *they are of old ordained to condemnation.* Thirdly, *They are ungodly men*, such as have no godliness at all in them, but are meer carnal and worldly men; it is a terrible thing for a Minister to say to any of you out of the Word of God, thou art an ungodly man or woman. Hast thou not *turn'd the grace of God into wantonness*, and abused it, when thou heardest that God was merciful? Hast thou took liberty to sin? thou art an ungodly man; for thou turnest the grace of God into wantonness: The blessed grace of God that should be the chief means to keep men from sin, thou makest it an advantage to further sin: And mark further, Fourthly, *Thou denyest our Lord Jesus Christ*; thou talkest of Gods mercy in Christ, but thou denyest the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ; What a heap of expressions are here, to set forth the condition of such men that turn the grace of God into wantonness? 1. *They creep in.* 2. *Were of old ordained to condemnation.* 3. *They are ungodly*: And 4. *they deny the Lord Jesus Christ*: Methinks this one Text should daunt the heart of every one that is before the Lord this day; never to presume upon acting of such a horrible wickedness, to sin because of Gods pardoning grace, for there is so much evil in this, to presume on sin because God is willing to forgive sin, that those that understand the glory of Gods grace, their hearts cannot but

ſtand amazed and riſe with indignation againſt it, Rom. 6. 1. *What ſhall we ſay then, Shall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound?*—ſome there were that did abuſe the grace of God to ſin; How does the Apoſtle riſe with indignation againſt that abominable wickedneſs? he does not grant it, but reject it with a horrible indignation, *God forbid.* What? to ſin that grace may abound, God forbid: What? to make uſe of the grace of God to further ſin; Shall we ſtand to anſwer theſe men, in the horrible reaſoning of their hearts? No, they are to be caſt off with deteſtation and rejection, with a *God forbid*, that there ſhould be any of ſuch vile and wicked hearts thus to abuſe the pardoning grace of God: Suppoſe you forgive one ſervant a fault, and another ſervant ſhould ſay, well, my Maſter hath forgiven him, I will do ſo too, upon that ground, if thou commit the ſame offence, he will not forgive thee, becauſe thou offendeſt preſumptuouſly, which is a moſt horrid thing. Let me a little further reaſon the caſe:

1. *It is an argument of an abominable heart, that hath no way to keep it from ſin, but only guilt, and fear of wrath and Hell*; Thou makeſt not the grace of God an argument to keep thee from ſin, nor the evil of ſin in it ſelf; which is a great diſhonour and wrong to God, there is more evil in ſin it ſelf, ſetting aſide the conſideration of the guilt and puniſhment of it, there is ten thouſand times more evil in ſin it ſelf, than all the puniſhment in Hell will countervail; and thou haſt no way to keep thee from ſin, but only the guilt and puniſhment, it is an argument of a baſe wicked heart.

2. *Suppoſe there were no evil of guilt or puniſhment, yet an ingenuous gracious ſpirit would never do it*; What ſhall I ſin, becauſe God will pardon? Shall I venture upon it? no, I will never do it: grace reaſons to a quite contrary end, that is an excellent Scripture in Tit. 2. 11. *The grace of God that brings Salvation*, it is this grace that reveals the pardon of ſin, this precious grace of God that brings ſalvation *has appeared to all men*. But to what end? *teaching us to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; the grace of God that brings ſalvation, it teaches us theſe leſſons, not ſuch a wicked leſſon

that

that we should presume to sin, on hopes that God may pardon it: No, *But to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly*; and not to take liberty to sin, to lye, steal, be filthy, and the like, because God will pardon; no, it teacheth other manner of lessons than these; and then it follows, *looking for that blessed hope and appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; mark the Text, there is a great deal in it, when the grace of God that brings salvation, and mercy, and pardon of sin is revealed, it teacheth us these Lessons, because of the grace and favour of God that is revealed to us, *that we should deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and then we may with comfort look for the blessed hope and appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, but otherwise you can never look for that blessed hope: let me speak to those that reason thus, that they may venture on sin, because of Gods pardoning grace, Does the Revelation of the grace of God teach you to live ungodlily, and in worldly lusts? Can you look for that blessed hope with comfort, and expect the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ? 'tis impossible, you cannot, 'tis not *a blessed hope* that you have, but a *cursed hope*, that all shall be well at last, though you live ungodly and wickedly: And for the appearing of the great God, certainly it will be a terrible appearing to thee, that made Christ who came to dissolve the works of the Devil, to be a means to uphold the works of the Devil.

3. *Did ever any Child of God make use of Scripture to reason for sin in such a wicked way*, for to presume to sin because God is willing to pardon? You cannot give me one example in all the Scripture of any of those that God hath shewed mercy to, that reasoned after this manner; I can give you examples to the contrary, how the Saints have reasoned otherwise, *Psal.* 130. 4. mark the reasoning of a gracious heart, *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared*, he reasons from the pardoning grace of God, to draw up his heart to the fear of God; as if he should say, *Lord, I have heard much of the Doctrine of the pardon of sin,*

and

and the great workings of thy grace to effect it, and of thy readiness to forgive, this is the end of it, that thou mightest be feared; thus is the effect this doctrine works in a gracious soul, and 'tis a good sign if you reason after this manner, but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou may'st be feared: If those Sermons you have heard of this Doctrine be a means to implant the fear of God in your hearts, this is a blessed sign they have had a good effect upon you; when you reason thus, *Because Lord, I have had so much of thy grace and mercy in forgiving my sin, through thy grace my soul shall fear thee more than ever before, and fear to sin more than ever before*: those that have hearts answering this Text, 'tis a good sign that the Word has had a powerful efficacy upon them: take another Text, Psal. 103. 1, 2, 3. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*, Why? *who forgiveth all thy iniquities*: Mark, it is a Psalm that *David* made of Gods mercy in forgiving of sin; the consideration of which makes him call upon his soul, and all that is within him to bless the Lord: Does God shew so much grace as to forgive sin? then *bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name*; 'tis not reasoning thus, God forgives iniquity, and therefore O my soul take liberty; thou need'st not be so strict: But *bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name*: those that have strength to do any thing for God, this is an argument will stir up all within them to bless God, when they see God appearing so infinitely gracious to them in the forgiveness of their sins; they so reason, that all they have, or can do, should be given unto him.

4. *You that think, you may take liberty to sin because God is gracious, and venture on it, because you conceit that God will never punish; think of this, the example of the damned in Hell*, they are flying in the face of God because they know that God will never pardon: and thou sinnest because thou hopest God will pardon, which is the worst of the two: the Devils and the damned are in such a condition, as that they know that God will never pardon them, and therefore they always curse God, because they know he will not pardon: but God offers pardon, and tenders grace to you, holds forth Jesus Christ

to you, and his blood and sufferings for the pardoning of you, and you blaspheme because you think he will pardon; of the two methinks you should judge the second sort worst; you blaspheme because you hope God will pardon, and the other blaspheme God because they know he will not pardon; *'Tis something worse to take liberty to sin because you hope God will pardon, than they that sin because that they are out of all hopes of pardon.* Thou that takest liberty on this ground to blaspheme the Name of God, What thinkest thou wilt become of thee another day? Now thou dost blaspheme, because *thou hopest that God will pardon thee*, ere long thou maist come to that condition to blaspheme God eternally, *because, he will not pardon thee*: As I make no question, but many Swearers, Drunkards, unclean persons and the like, that have gone on in sin on this ground, because they hoped that God would pardon them; are now gone to their own place, and blaspheme because they find that God will never pardon: so that thou that blaspheme'st now, it may be thou shalt blaspheme eternally, but it will be otherwise: thou dost it now in hopes that God will pardon; thou shalt there do it, because thou shalt have no hopes that he will ever pardon.

5. *Thou that sinnest now in hopes that God will pardon, if God inlighten thy mind, these things will be an intolerable burden to thee*; and if there be any thing that will indanger the sinking of thy soul into the bottomless gulf of despair, it is like to be this, you now give way to the reasonings of your own hearts, to further sin from the consideration of Gods pardoning mercy; the same reason that furthers sin in you now, from the consideration of pardon, will make you have further thoughts of despairing of Gods mercy: Suppose thou goest on a great while, and heapest up sin on this presumption: Let me put this into thee, either God will inlighten thy Conscience, or he will not do it; if he never do it, thou art eternally lost; but if he do it, if he come at length and awaken Conscience, then what a load of anguish and trouble will lie upon thy soul, that will make thee cry out, *O Lord, I have not only sinned: but now I come to seek for mercy, my mouth is stopt with the thoughts of that mercy that I have abused: Now nothing*

but

but free grace can do me good, my Conscience tells me how I have abused this grace, I have presumed on sin because of this, I have made the thoughts I had of this grace a motive to further me in sin; and now with what face can I go to sue for this grace and mercy? these will be stinging thoughts to thee another day, when a Minister shall come to apply the grace of God to thy soul, thou wilt say there is mercy with God to pardon sinners, but not for those, that have abused the grace of God as I have done; *Manasseh*, and *Paul*, 'tis true, they committed many great sins, but did they ever commit any sin upon this *ground*, in hope of pardon? O look unto it, let none go out from the presence of the Lord this day, with thoughts to venture on sin, because ye hope it may be pardoned; to venture on sin on that ground, is the most horrible cursedest thing that can be.

Tenthly, *A tenth way of dishonouring the grace of Gods pardoning mercy; as to sin in hopes of pardon, so to sin after pardon*: after God hath revealed this grace unto you, then to sin, this is a great dishonour to this grace: Many that have been in trouble for their sins, and in their trouble have cryed to God for mercy, and God hath spoken peace to their souls, and hath told them that their sins are pardoned, and that he will cleanse their souls from the guilt of sin by the blood of his own Son; and yet after all this they have again fain to their former sins: I have spoke before of this degree of dishonouring Gods pardoning grace, but now I am speaking of a further degree, not only to fall into that sin you have sought for pardon of, but to fall into that sin, *that you have some comfortable assurance of pardon of*, 1 King. 11. 9. The Lord was angry with *Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord, that had appeared to him twice*; remember, hath not God appeared to some of you twice, and given you assurance of his love and pardoning grace? God came with sweet comforts and rejoyced your souls; and what do you turn from the Lord after he hath appeared twice to you, and said unto thee, thy sins are pardoned? this is a grievous thing, Ezra 9. 14. *Should we again break thy Commandements? — Wouldst not thou be angry with us, should we a-*

gain sin, would it then not consume us? so after God has delivered us from condemnation, the *guilt* of *sin*, and the *spirit* of *bondage*; What? to trespass again, it is just with God to be *angry* with us, Psal. 85. 8. *The Lord will speak peace* ——, *but let them not return again to folly*; if God speak peace, O return not again to folly; I appeal unto you, hath God ever spoke peace to your souls? Have you heard the voice of gladness speaking in your hearts, saying, *Son*, or *Daughter be of good cheer, go in peace, thy sins are pardoned?* Have you not heard this? If you have not, you had need to get it; if you have, then return not again to the same sin that God hath graciously pardoned. 1. *Return not to the same sin.* 2. *Return not to any other sin.* 1. *Return not to the same sin*, it is a question, and a great case of Conscience, *Whether it be possible for a Child of God after God hath dealt unto him the pardon of sin, whether he may commit that sin again?* some have denyed it; I remember some antient Divines, *Origen* and *Tertullian* upon those words in Heb. 6. *For it is impossible for those that were once inlightned* —— *if they shall fall away to renew them by repentance*; he applies it to the sin of uncleanness; and says he, a second repentance is not promised in the Name of Christ to Adulterers and Fornicators; thus I may boldly say, we do not find any certain expres example in all the Book of God, of any Child of God that did fall into the same gross outward sins after an actual repentance, and making up his peace with God for sin; we find no expres Scripture: I do not say, we find no example of the Children of God that have not committed the same sin again, as *Peter* and *Lot*, but we find no example of any gross sin that they have faln into: mark it, after their repentance and reconciliation, what was done amiss, was done before they came to have it laid home unto their Consciences, and applyed unto their hearts for the humbling of their souls in making their peace with God: True, *David committed Adultery*, but never the second time, after he had his bones broken, he fell not again; and so *Peter*, *after he went out and wept bitterly, he never denyed his Master again*; and so *Abraham* equivocated, but we read not, that after

any

any actual renewal of faith and repentance, that he committed that sin again: a wound while it is open, and not fully closed, it may bleed again; but when it is fully closed, to bleed again is dangerous; and so any of the people of God, after the actual renewal of their faith and repentance, you cannot give me an example that any of them have faln into the same sin again; I do not absolutely deny it, but I say it is a dangerous thing, God hath not left an example; he hath left examples that his Children have faln, but not after they have renewed their faith and repentance, that they have falⁿ into the same sins again; I speak not of inward thoughts, I know that they after repentance will return again; but for any outward gross actual sin after the renewal of faith and repentance, they have not return'd again to commit the same sin: when once *a joynt is out, or a leg broke and set, usually that joynt or bone is stronger than before*; and so I might shew you after they have sinned, and been set again, they have been stronger than before: a Child of God falling into sin is just like the breaking of a bone. Gal. 6. 1. *And you that are spiritual must restore such a one*; the word in the Original is *put him in joynt again*; any godly man or member of a Church that falls into sin, is as a bone out of joynt, and you that are spiritual must set it again; if once you have a bone out of joynt the longer you let it go, the more painful it is; so if you fall into any sin, the longer you let it go, the more unweildy you will be: No marvel you cannot go about your business handsomely, when you have a bone out of joynt; but has God been so merciful as to put you into joynt again; you know what Christ said to the man, *Thou art made whole*, &c. so I say to you, you that have sinned, and God has pardoned you, set you in joynt again, *Go your way, you are made whole, take heed of sinning again, lest a worse thing befal you.*

2. *A second sort that dishonour the grace of God are such that though they fall not into the same gross sins again after pardoning mercy, yet are negligent in the ways of God*, loose, slight, vain, sensual, carnal, dead-hearted in their conversation, and do not answer the grace of God revealed to them, but are more

drosse in their spirits than before; It may be for the time wherein they were seeking this grace of God, they were strict in their conversation, in their ways conscientious; and in every thing walk'd close with God, durst not for their lives omit a known duty, attended on the Word with a great deal of patience, their hearts closed with it, and it was as meat and drink to them; and in their conversation they were very fruitful in the places where they lived: But now having had some comfortable assurance of Gods mercy pardoning them, after this they are grown slight, vain, loose, and dead-hearted; this is a very grievous evil where ever it may be charged: It is a very great evil for any to abuse Gods general Bounty, Patience, and Long-sufferance, and the good we receive from God in the use of the creature; but far worse to abuse the grace of God in Christ, manifested in pardoning mercy: I shall shew this to be a great evil, and shall labour to convince you of it.

1. *Consider and call to remembrance what the dayes of old were?* How in former times it was with you, when you were seeking the pardoning grace of God? then you thought *if ever God come into my soul, and give me any assurance of pardon of sin, How infinitely should my soul be ingaged to bless God, and how shall I for ever be bound to give up my self, soul and body, what I am, and what I can do to live to the praise of the grace of God; if God come into my soul and pardon this sin of mine, the guilt whereof lies so heavy upon my spirit*; I appeal unto your own Consciences, Did not you think in your own thoughts, that it was impossible that ever you should come to live as you do? certainly if the thoughts of many people might this day appear, they cannot but say, *Time was (when I was seeking after the mercy of God, to pardon my sin that lay upon my Conscience) I thought with my self thus; he is a blessed man indeed that has assurance of this, and if ever I had peace spoken to my soul, I thought my life would have been such, that (in my apprehension) I thought it was impossible that I should have grown to this dulness, deadness, slightness, and vanity, that now I see I am*: then now as *Paul* said to the *Galatians, Where is the blessedness you spake of*, time was you said the pardoning

mercy

mercy of God it was a blessed thing, where is that blessedness you spake of, that after you have received it, you should grow wanton, loose, and slight? What, have you not a mightier Argument to draw your hearts to God, after he hath spoken peace, than ever you had before? The apprehension of *guilt*, *danger*, and *trouble* of *spirit* for sin, that was an Argument to keep you from sin before; but if God have spoken peace, in applying this pardoning grace; Have you not Arguments, of another nature than these, which are far more powerful? Certainly, those that know the grace of God in Christ, know that there is no such powerful argument as the grace of God in Christ in pardoning sin, to keep up the heart with God, and to keep from sin as this, no such argument in the world that is like to this; the eyeing of Gods grace is a special thing to quench and keep down lust; whereas those that sin after this mercy, whose lusts and corruptions overcome the power of this pardoning mercy, they are deprived of the best and most special spiritual helps, that can be to keep from sin; Phil. 4.7. *The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*; the word in the Original is very significant, *shall guard your hearts*; this is the emphaticalness of the phrase, as if the Apostle had said, *The sweet peace of God, is such as passeth understanding, and shall guard your hearts*; as indeed the peace of God that comes to flow out from the sweetness of the pardoning grace of God is such, as *passeth understanding*; but yet after all this, there will be many dangers, and you are to be involved with many temptations; but this peace of God will be a guard to your souls, to keep you from sin and temptation: The soul of a Believer that hath peace spoken to it, is there compared to a *Captain in War*, or a *Prince* that apprehends himself in some *danger*, sets a strong guard about his Person to keep him from danger: Now what is the guard that keeps the soul of a Believer from temptation and danger? It is the *peace of God*, that is the greatest and strongest guard in the world; if you complain of sin and temptations, and that you are afraid that sin will surprize you; What guard would you have to keep you? *The peace of God is the best guard* that can be; Now after this,

this hath been a guard unto you, if thy sin *break* in upon thee, as *fully*, and as *freely*, as if there were no guard at all; thy condition is very sad.

2. *Let me further speak to such that sin after the pardoning grace of God, and do not walk answerable to that grace that was set forth in witnessing the pardon of sin*; 'tis a thousand to one thou wilt lose thy evidence; 'tis true, it is irrevocable in Gods heart, yet thou may'st carry it so, that by thy loose walking thou may'st lose the evidence of it in thy own soul, and it may be as sad with thee as if thou were not at all pardoned; we are to know that when an Evidence is given in, concerning pardon of sin, every renewed act of sin is a blot to that Evidence: A man that having Evidences of Lands, or an Estate, will keep them fair; but if he should suffer them to be blotted, one blot after another, perhaps so blotted as neither he nor any one else is able to read them; it may cost him a great deal of trouble before he get them renew'd again; so 'tis with a poor creature that hath got some comfortable Evidence of the pardon of sin, but giving way to temptation, commits a sin, and there he gets a blot; and then, the next temptation, coming possibly so worldly Mindedness, Passion, Unbelief, slightness of Spirit, Vanity, Sensuality, and abuse of the Creatures; by often yielding to these, he gets more and renewed blots; so that if his Evidences be look'd into, they will be found so full of blots, that no marvel in a time of temptation they cannot read them: possibly some that are skilful in the way of God, and the nature of the Covenant of grace, may pick out somewhat of the meaning of them; but thou hast fain so fouly from God that thy Evidences are so blotted and blur'd, that in thy own apprehension thou can'st see nothing, but that thy condition is as dangerous as ever it was and as uncomfortable, thy Evidences are so blotted that thou can'st not read them thy self, and so hast no comfort by them, and 'tis to thee as if thou had'st none at all; this is the duty, and would be the comfort of every Christian, that when they have gotten their Evidences, that they would keep them so clear, that they might read them every morning, and run and read them, and not stand poring

pooring and beating their brains and hearts, and fret themselves, because they cannot find such and such a thing that was to them an Evidence of the pardon of their sins, this is through their neglect, and if they had been careful to have kept their Evidences clear and plain, O the comfort they might have had to have read them every morning: If the Pollution of sin recoil back again, no marvel the sense of guilt of sin upon thy Conscience recoil back again; if God have committed such a Jewel to thee as the Evidence of pardon of sin, and thou makest no better use of it, 'tis just with God to take it out of thy hands, and keep it in his own; and though he shew mercy at last unto thee, yet thou may'st not know it whilst thou art in this world; 'tis a very hard thing to recover it again: those that have had the pardon of sin seal'd unto them, have by their falling into sin afterwards, so darkned and lost their Evidences that they could never recover them again; as *David*, see how he cries out, *Create in me a clean heart, and restore to me the joy of thy salvation*; *David* saw all was gone, and that there must be a new Creation and Restoration; *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation*; O the joy that once I had, and now have lost; O Lord that I may have it once again: *David* had a little sensual pleasure for a while, but he paid dear for it, he lost *the joy of Gods salvation*: What think you *David* would have given to have got it again? for ought we know, he never had it so fully as before: Those that have had some comfortable Evidence of pardoning grace, and afterwards through their negligence, loosness, and vanity, have lost it, may never come to enjoy the comfort of it again as formerly they did; and therefore when *Peter* had sinned against his *Master*; mark, when Christ came to *Peter*, says he, *Lovest thou me?* he answered, *Lord thou knowest I love thee*; Christ puts it to him again; *Lovest thou me?* he would not take his first answer, but puts it to him the second and third time, *Lovest thou me?* as if Christ had said to *Peter*, look to yourself, it is not any present sudden work that can recover your Evidences again; you that have sinned and darkned your Evidences, had need to put this Question

to your own hearts again and again, to get it sure, that you love Christ, and that Christ loves you.

3. Thirdly, *Let me speak to such as sin after pardon, it may justly provoke God to deal with you, though he do not take away his everlasting love; yet to deal with you as a Slave rather than a Child; I mean, in following you with sore and heavy chastisements*, though he may save your souls at last, yet it may cause God to meet you with such sore and evil things in this world, that for that sloath and sluggishness of your hearts you may pay dear for it, before you die; truly so may be the dealings of God with his own Children whom he pardons, *Jer.* 2. 14. God is speaking there to his own people: *Is Israel a servant? Is he a home-born slave?* and at vers. 18. *What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt?* So thou whom God hath heretofore received to mercy and pardon; but thou hast walk'd so, that Gods ways to thee seem to be such as it may be said, *Is this man or woman a servant? Is he a home-born slave?* God speaks it with pity, *Israel is my dear Son*; How comes it to pass that *he is as a home-born slave?* What, is he a servant, and brought into such a condition as a servant or a slave? What is the matter? Why? *he is in the way of Egypt*; so it may be said to thee who walkest in the sensual drowsiness of thy spirit; Hast thou not been in the way of *Egypt?* Are thy ways such, that Gods dealings with thee are as if thou were a servant, and a home-born slave? Where is that filial ingenuous spirit of thine, that God is fain to deal with thee as now he doth?

4. *Again, thou that sinnest after pardon, thou comest to aggravate thy sins more than the sins of the wicked, in some regards*; those that are wicked, and go on in their vile ways against God, you cry out of them as wretched creatures, base, filthy, drunkards, swearers, lyars, false men and women in their dealings, such as are not to be dealt withal in the world, you think these are wicked; but you that sin after mercy, your sins have an aggravation upon them beyond theirs; for they never knew what Gods sweet pardoning mercy meant; they never heard God speak peace to their souls, as thou hast to thine; they never had the secret Visitations of Gods

Spirit,

Spirit, nor the warm beams of Gods mercy shining into their hearts; they were never acquainted with such things, and therefore though they go on in sin, after which they have been accustomed, 'tis not so much to be wondred at: But thou that hast had a taste of the sweetness of Gods love in Christ, in pardoning mercy, for thee to sin, after this, 'tis a greater aggravation than the sins of the other, and as 'tis a greater aggravation than the sins of the wicked, so thy sin goes more near to the heart of Christ than the sins of the wicked and ungodly do, the sins of the most prophanest wretch in all the Town do not go so near to the heart of Christ, as those that are committed after receipts of mercy from Christ. What, you my sons to do thus and thus against me? I remember 'tis reported of *Cæsar, when many with their Poinyards came about him, and stab'd him in the Senate-House, at length comes* Brutus, *whom he had done much good for, he comes and gives him a blow, he look'd upon him, and cries out, What, thou my son* Brutus, *wilt thou give me a blow and stab?* It went nearer to the heart of *Cæsar*, to have *Brutus* come and give him a wound and stab, than for all the other that came round about and stab'd him; so Christ may look upon thee, for whom he has purchas'd pardon, shed his blood, and laid down his life for; What, thou my son, wilt thou sin against me? for wicked wretches that are strangers to him, no marvel if they sin against him; but for you that are his sons, his redeemed ones, that have received such pardoning grace and mercy, for you to sin, this goes to the heart of Christ more than the sins of the ungodlyest wretch in all the Parish. And would you not be loth to do more against Christ than the vilest wretch in the Parish? you that have received so much mercy from Christ. *Further, other mens sins anger God, but no mens sins grieve the spirit of God so, as the sins of those that have received pardon*; they go to the heart of God, *and grieve the Spirit by which they are sealed*; the Spirit of God that hath sealed to your souls the pardon of your sins, let not that Spirit be grieved; 'tis a greater sin to grieve the blessed Spirit of God than you are aware of. Further, yet once more, *you bring a disgrace upon the*

Doctrine of Assurance of Pardon: We preach that a man may not only have some good hopes that his sins are pardoned; but we say God hath revealed such a fulness of riches of grace in the Gospel, that a man may have certain and full assurance of the pardon of his sin; as if he heard a voice from Heaven, speaking to him by name, thy sins are pardoned; or as if when Christ in the days of his flesh, said to any one, *Son, go in peace, thy sins are pardoned*; certainly, there may be as full assurance of pardon of sin, by the witness of the Spirit of God, as if such a voice came from Heaven: But our Adversaries say, open but that gap, and 'tis an open way for men to take liberty to commit any sin; What need men care what sins they commit, when they know they are pardoned? that has been objected against us; but now we say, there is such a vertue in the grace of God going along with pardoning of sin, that heals the soul, as well as comforts the soul; we answer it thus, but you take away our answer, and disgrace that blessed Doctrine of Pardon of Sin; for wherein does it appear, there is such a healing power in the assurance of the pardon of sin? If it be so, then you would walk more strictly than any man in the world can do, in the time of the greatest horror of Conscience that possible can be; and this would bring an honour to the Doctrine of Assurance, but you by sinning after pardon, How do you disgrace this blessed Doctrine, and take away the answer out of our mouths? So much for the present, to be spoken to those that *dishonour the pardoning mercy of God by sinning after pardon.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Dishonour done to the Grace of God by not resting on it.
2. Of the Evil of it.

THere is one sort more that are great dishonourers of the pardoning grace of God, and they are those that think they honour him, and yet dishonour him exceedingly, such as being apprehensive of the greatness of their sins, the vileness of them and their own misery, by reason thereof *lie down in a sullen desperate discouraging mood, under the weight and burden of them, and are ready to turn against themselves, saying*, certainly, my condition is such, as I must expect no other but to lie for ever under the burden of my sins, and bear for ever the punishment of them; I have heard much indeed of the riches of the pardoning grace of God; but for my part, my condition is such, that little expectation I have of being made partaker of it; certainly this kind of sullen discouragement, in lying under our sins, is a mighty aggravation of our sin, and exceedingly dishonourable to the pardoning grace of God; many that are thus, let them hear never so much opened of the riches of the Gospel, and the infiniteness of the grace of God, all is nothing to them, it raises them not from the sullenness of their hearts, and the discouragement of spirit that hangs upon them, they are like to those in *Exod.* 6. 9. that *Moses* spake unto, *but they hearkened not for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage*; God sent *Moses* to shew them the grace of God, to deliver them from their bondage, but says the Text, they hearkened not to *Moses*, only for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage; so many people when God comes to awaken their Consciences, there is so much anguish in the sense of their sin, that they hearken not to what is said; let them hear never so much in private or in publick, they are just where they were; the same complaints, sullenness and objections as before: you may answer all their objections

against the grace of God, that they know not what to say, but go away for half an hour, and they will have the same objections as if never any thing had been said unto them, certainly there is more evil in this, than you are aware of; this limiting and determining of Gods grace: 'tis true, there is reason to judge your selves unworthy, and that God may deny you, but that God will deny you is another thing; there is a great deal of difference in these: some when they are put upon the use of means, will confess they ought to attend upon them, and that they will do it, but yet when I have done all, I have little hopes that God will deliver me, but I shall dye and perish in my sins, as that woman, 1 *Kings* 17. 12. says she, *I am a poor Woman, I have but a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little Oyl in a Cruse, and am gathering two sticks that I may eat it and dye*; so much as I have I am preparing, and when I have eaten this I must dye, thus says many a soul, I may go hear the word and pray, but to little purpose; But I will go and do them and then I must dye. It is but little that I can make of Prayer, when I have spoken two or three words, I am presently distracted with wandring thoughts. *Two or three sticks I may lay together, but when I have done that, I must dye.* Now know and consider this day, what from God shall be said unto you, thou much dishonourest the pardoning grace of God.

First, *Know it is very low thoughts thou hast of the pardoning mercy of God, and what Christ hath purchased, and what God hath intended from everlasting in the Covenant of grace*, to those souls for whom he intends good; and though for his intentions he keeps them to himself (and would not have thee meddle with that) till he manifest them in the work of grace, yet [illegible] mean time having revealed no further, but that thou must have it as well as any other, he expects from thee that thou shouldst venture thy self upon his grace through his Son Jesus Christ, and though thou saist thou art vile, unworthy, and after the use of means, that thou art unprofitable, vain, full of wandring thoughts and deadness, and therefore thou canst not expect grace; know that thou hast but mean thoughts of the grace of God, that sees't such

things

things as these against it, these are poor low unworthy things to set against the grace of God, and they do lower the grace of God too much, that set such things as these against it. A Scholar would think it a dishonour to him, for one to come to reason with him, and bring nothing but poor low weak objections that are not worth the answering, he would think it a disgrace to him; certainly it is a dishonour to the grace of God, to set such things as these against it, thou look'st upon it in a natural way, and dost not consider, it is the great design of God above all things in the World, to magnifie his grace in pardoning of sin, certainly were this understood, these things would be counted too low and unworthy to be set against such a design, when it is the greatest, God hath to magnifie his name in.

Secondly, *Thou judgest of God according to thy own thoughts*, and this God will take exceeding ill, as they *Psal.* 50. 21. *Because I kept silence, thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self*; 'Tis a great evil to measure God by our own thoughts, and there are *two waies* of dishonouring God by it.

1. *The way of the carnal secure sinner*, he measured God by his own thoughts, he thinks God is not so strict to be angry for every fault, and if thou offendest, that if we go and cry him mercy, he will be pleased again. We think it an easie matter to please God, and because God is silent, we think he do's not hate sin as he doth, that's one way of dishonouring God.

A Second way is when a man comes to be troubled for sin, and conscience enlightened, then we think slightly of God another way. It may be thou hast a hard heart and wouldst not pardon one that provokes thee again and again, thou wouldst not pass by such and such offences and thou think'st God is so too, thou think'st God to be like thy self, and that he cannot bear with thee in such and such things, because thou canst not bear with others. This is to judge God by our own line, but know, that the thoughts of Gods pardoning grace are as far above ours *as the Heavens are above the Earth*; and therefore we must not measure God by our own thoughts.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *Thou dishonourest the pardoning grace of God, by having low thoughts of it, because it is contrary to the Scriptures.* For the main scope of all the Scriptures is to magnifie the pardoning grace of God, and to set it out in its greatness to thy soul, and thou mak'st it thy main work to undervalue it. Luther *says, the scope of the whole Scriptures are but this, that we might know and acknowledge God to be a gracious and merciful God*; and a *greater* than *Luther* speaks this, that is a notable Text of Scripture in the *Acts* of the *Apostles* 10. 42, 43. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testifie, it is he that was ordained of God to be the Judge of Quick and Dead. To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Mark, to him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins: So that it is the scope and intention of all the Prophets, to witness this to a poor soul, that whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sin: You will say, whosoever believes on him, but there is all the Question; but thou hindrest thy self of believing, thou wouldst have assurance before thou dost believe, thou must believe that thou mayest have it, that is, thou must venture and cast thy soul upon this grace of God; all the Prophets witness this, that whosoever believes on him shall receive remission of sins, therefore by thy sitting down in these sullen discouraging thoughts of thy heart, thou giv'st a lye to all the Prophets of God, thou giv'st not a lye only to our preaching, for certainly so it is, God sees it so, but to all the Prophets of God: now when God makes it the work of all the Prophets to witness forgiveness of sins by Christ, wilt thou make it thy work to object against it?

Again, Know that thy reasonings are quite contrary to the Scriptures, for thou reasoneſt, that pardoning mercy will not be thine, because thy sins are so great, *Psal.* 25. 11. *David* cries to God to *pardon his iniquities for they are great*, he makes the greatness of his sins, an argument to drive him to God, not from God, and this is Gods own argument, *Gen.* 8. 21. *I will not again curse the Ground any more for mans sake*; why?

for

for the imaginations of Mans heart are evil from his youth; one would have thought it should have been thus, the imaginations of mans heart are evil, and therefore I will do nothing else but curse the ground: No says God, I will not, because the imaginations of mans heart are evil from his youth, as if he should say, if I should never leave curſing till man leave ſinning, I ſhould always be curſing, ſo ſays God, If I ſhould never pardon ſin till mans ſins are leſs, I ſhould never pardon at all. So in *Hoſea* 2. 13, 14. You have God reaſoning there like to this here; *She went after her lovers, and forgat me, ſays God*, 14. v. *Therefore will I allure her, and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her*. For ſhe had forgotten me, and went after her lovers; ſee how the Scripture makes that an argument of Gods mercy. Take another Text in *Iſaiah* the 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs, I was wroth and ſmote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*. Mark what follows, *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him, and will reſtore comfort to him and to his mourners*, he went on frowardly in the perverſneſs of his Spirit ſays God, I have ſeen his ways and will heal him: thus God expreſſes himſelf to the end of the Chapter to incourage the hearts of thoſe that are ſenſible of their ſins, and would be ſenſible of the evil of ſin, and account it a great miſery that they cannot be ſenſible of it, the Lord would incourage them, therefore the greatneſs of ſin is no diſcouragement at all.

Further, *The way that thou takeſt is the way to periſh*, there can be no good in that way, thou muſt pine away in thine iniquity, but for to get any Counſel, help, comfort, or mercy, be aſſur'd thou canſt not, therefore reaſon as the *Lepers*, 2 *Kings* 7. 3. *If we ſit here we ſhall certainly dye, if we go to the Camp of the* Syrians *they can but kill us, ſee us, ſave us and go*. And it was a good going to them, for they met with that that help'd and relieved them; So do you ſay, if I ſit down thus, there is no way but I muſt dye, but however though I ſhould never get any comfort or help, yet it is better venture that way than the other; thou knoweſt not what thou muſt meet with, may be thou think'ſt it humility to

 lie

sit down in this way; but know that most desperate pride may be under it, and hand with such discouragements. We know the most proud spirits may be the most discouraged spirits, as the Devil, the Scripture sets him forth to be as proud as Lucifer, yet none so proud as spirits under such discouragements: there may be much pride in discouragements, therefore take heed lest there be any secret pleasing of your selves this way, though you be in some trouble, yet if you feel there is a secret pleasure in that smart that falls upon you, and some kind of contentedness in going your own way, as many men though they meet with abundance of Crosses, yet if they go their own way, it pleases them much; take heed, there may be desperate pride at the bottom of all this.

Ob. *If this be to dishonour the pardoning grace of God what would you have us to do?* (We would not speak it, were it not so, to what end is it for us to study, and pray to God for light and help to open the grace of God, if a little discouragement of heart and fullness of Spirit, shall turn all aside, and make all that we say to be of none effect; therefore great reason there is that we should tell you this is a great dishonouring of the pardoning grace of God:) but what, would you have us to doubt no more, but go on and perswade our hearts our sins are pardoned and there's an end?

Ans. *No, if I should say you could do this, it would be in vain for me to say all this*, for it is not in your power to cast off all fears of Gods anger, and presently perswade your selves your sins are pardoned, this is not in your power to do: and therefore this is not the thing I put you upon, it must be the mighty work of God; in the 2. of *Ezech.* when the Prophet had done in the end of the 1. *Chap.* the *next verse* of the 2. *Chap.* he says, *Son of Man stand upon thy feet*, but that was not enough to raise the Prophet, no not for God himself to say *Son of Man stand upon thy feet*, but together with the voice of God, *verse* the 2. there enters into him the Spirit of God, and sets him on his feet; so it is with the Ministers of the Word, we speak to souls that are cast down under the burden of their sins, to stir up themselves that they may not

always

alwayes lye down stooping, but stand upon their feet. But together with our speaking, God must speak and convey his spirit to the soul, before it is able to stand up.

Quest. *Well, but what would you have us to do?*

Answ. These are the things I would have you do.

First, *I would have you turn your fears of presuming, into fears of dishonouring the grace of God.* I would have you be as fearful that Gods grace should be dishonoured by unbelief, as now you are fearful lest you should presume upon Gods grace; those that are secure, they fear not lest they should presume; but those whose consciences are awakened, their great fear is lest they should presume upon Gods grace, and dishonour it by presumption; if thou feareſt thou shouldst dishonour the grace of God by presumption, why shouldst thou not fear lest thou shouldst dishonour it by unbelief, as well as by presumption? certainly the strength of this temptation is from the Devil. Those that have their consciences troubled for sin, he labours to keep them from venturing on the grace of God, lest they should presume; but the way to cut the sinews of this temptation, is to fear rather lest thou shouldst dishonour the grace of God by unbelief; many look not at unbelief as a great sin, but God is displeased at thy unbelief, as much as by those that do presume.

Secondly, *The thing I would have you to do, you that are under the checkings of conscience for sin, and full of doubts that God will not pardon, and you cannot be perswaded your sins are pardonable, labour to set the greatness of the pardoning grace of God in the fulness of it, to the utmost you can, before the eye of your souls.* That it may be before you; though you cannot reach to it, yet set it before you; you do not know what an efficacy the pardoning grace of God hath, by being presented before your souls, and kept there, no marvel you find not the power of it, when as you set it not before your eyes: the efficacy of Gods grace lyes much in presenting it before your souls. *The Brazen Serpent, if they look'd not to it, it would never heal.* So though the pardoning grace of God, be in books and Sermons, yet unless it be before your eyes, and you fix and fasten the eye of your souls upon it, it will never heal

you: therefore keep it before your eyes, *Psal.* 5. 3. There is an excellent expression; *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* I suppose many of you in the morning will not neglect prayer to God, but mark the expression, *I will direct my Prayer*; 'Tis not I will say my prayers, but direct my prayer, there's a great emphasis in it. I will level my Prayer aright, and dart up my soul aright to Heaven, and observe the way that God would have me, and so direct my heart in prayer to him. It may be some of you go thus far, not to content your selves with a dead-hearted sluggish Prayer: But what do you look to all the day after? what shall wandring and discouraging thoughts bring you to look down all the day? Would you look up to your morning Prayers, and what you prayed for, there would come a great deal of efficacy upon your souls.

Thirdly, *Be careful to keep your hearts stirring and active*, be afraid of deadness and dulness; take heed of such thoughts, *Why should I pray and dread, when as I have no heart to perform any duty*: Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you; if ever your hearts were active at any thing in the world, it ought to be in this, if once you give your selves liberty to lye down, and the activity of your Spirits be gone, you are in a sad condition, 'twill be very difficult to get them up again; take heed of a sullen heart, you may be very active, and yet calm, quiet, and patient, there's a great conjunction between these two, when I am active and yet calm, stilling of my heart under God, and yet stirring of my heart unto God, these two are joyned together in those whom God directs unto himself.

Fourthly, *Renew thy resolutions*, that what ever becomes of thee, whether God will ever speak peace or no to thee, yet so long as thou liveſt, thou will do what thou canst, to honour his name, and keep from sin: Keep thy heart under the power of this resolution.

Fifthly, *Keep thy heart in a waiting frame*, use the means, *lye at the Poole*; as the man that lay many years waiting for the stirring of the Waters, met with help at last; so do thou keep thy heart in a waiting frame, and think with thy self if mercy

come

come at last, it will recompence thee for all thy waitings and pains.

Sixthly, *Be willing to entertain the beginnings of Gods discovering of himself*; if it be but a little glimpse make much of it, and bless God for it: Many in their trouble seek to God for pardon; but they are always complaining, either to their Neighbours or themselves; but seldom expresse themselves in Thanksgivings: Now, you should observe what God hath granted, what beginnings and glimpse of his grace appear; look and see if there be not *a little cloud, the bigness of a mans hand*, it may breed a shower, a shower of grace may come after it; but take notice of it, when it is but the bigness of a mans hand: it is a great evil in such as are under trouble of Conscience, because they find not full Assurance presently, they think they receive nothing at all; Well, wait upon God under these directions, and as you shall not be so guilty of dishonouring the pardoning mercy of God; so will be a means to bring great good unto your soule. We have now done with the several ways of dishonouring the pardoning grace of God; and because God is very jealous of this, and takes it exceeding ill; I have been the larger in it, now I am to shew the evil of it.

Of the Evil of dishonouring the Pardoning Grace of God.

First, *There is this evil in it, because it is a sinning against mercy, which God accounts his glory*; a man takes it exceeding ill, if he be wronged in his Goods, or good Name, or in any thing he apprehends an excellency in; and (mark it) *The greater excellency a man apprehends in any thing the greater evil he accounts the wrong that is done to him in that thing*: As a covetous man, if you wrong him in his Estate, he presently as a mad man cannot bear it, because you wrong him of that which he counts his greatest excellency; so a Scholar, a man of parts will rather you wrong him in any thing than account of him as a Dunce, because he accounts his parts and learning his greatest excellency, therefore he would not be wronged in that: so you that are Marriners, and have skill

in sailing, and in the Art of Navigation, if one vilifie your work, and find fault with you there, it is as if one touch'd your free-hold, you cannot bear it; Why? because you account it your excellency, so it is between us and God, if we wrong God in that which he accounts his excellency, he cannot bear it; Now the pardoning mercy of God is that which God counts his excellency and glory, *Exod.* 34. when God descended *to shew Moses his glory, but Pardoning Mercy* was one of the great Master-pieces, wherein God accounted his glory to consist, more than in the making of Heaven and Earth: Now for God to be contemn'd in that wherein his glory consists, must needs be a great dishonour to him, the mercy of God comes from *the bowels of his compassions*; Now if you strike one on the arm or shoulder, it is not so much as if you strike him on his Bowels, when you dishonour the pardoning grace of God, you do as it were spurn at the Bowels of God and Christ, and he accounts it so; certainly you that can hear this, and neglect it, and prize and prefer every base lust before it, you do as it were go up and down kicking and spurning at the bowels of God, and that Child that should spurn at his Mothers bowels, is not so much to be blamed as thou art that goest on in sin, after thou hast heard the pardoning grace of God opened to thee, thy going on in sin is a spurning at the very bowels of God.

Secondly, *This aggravates the sin of such men above the sins of the Heathen*; their sins are nothing in comparison of those that live under the Gospel, and have the grace of God opened unto them; at the Day of Judgement, when thou hearest them condemned for sins against the Light of Nature, they may say, *Lord, What shall become of these?* we never heard of such grace and pardoning mercy in Christ as you heard of, that have lived in such and such a place, and have had the pardoning mercy of God opened to you; if they do not plead against you, yet it will be made known before all Men and Angels what you have heard, and what has been preached unto you, and what God has done for you, and for you to continue in sin, your sins will thereby be aggravated, and your condemnation heightned.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *Your sin is above the sin of the Devils*, the sin of the Devils is not so great as yours is that live under the light of the Gospel, and have the pardoning grace of God preached to you; for though the Devils blaspheme God continually, yet their sins have not this aggravation upon them that yours have. God never came and told them he was willing to pardon their sins; nor did Christ make any purchase for them by his blood, but to you is the Gospel preached, and pardon offered daily to you. Are not your sins greater then, than the sins of the Devils? Would not you account it a great aggravation of any gross offence, that hath wronged and injured you, and should seek for pardon, and yet you rather seek to him, and offer pardon to him, and sue to him to accept it, and he goes away and contemns you, would not you account this a great aggravation? know, thy sinning against this grace, makes thee to be in a worse condition than *Belzebub* himself, that is the chief of all the Devils, he had never this aggravation, which is a dreadful one to sin against the pardoning mercy of God; so that the very Devils may complain against you and say, *O Lord we sinned against thee, but thou tookest advantage against us presently for our sin, but how have these sinned against thy pardoning mercy? but have been offered to them again and again, which was never offered to us.*

Fourthly, *I might shew you the evil the Scripture says of it*, take two or three texts, Joh. 3. 18. 19. *He that believeth not is condemned already*, and more yet, *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him*; it sticks fast upon such a one, and that place in Heb. 10. 29. *If they that sinned under Moses Law died without mercy, who had but little of this grace revealed unto them, How much more punishment shall they have, that sin under the Gospel, under the full revelation of this grace?* But to conclude all, there is nothing will be such an aggravation of thy torments in Hell, as these Sermons of Gods pardoning mercy, if thou go on in sin: When we speak of the pardoning grace of God, we cannot do it without trembling hearts. Why? Because we know God will be exceeding quick with those that have the grace of the Gospel preached unto them: And therefore when we come upon this argu-

argument, we cannot handle as a Physician that is giving his Patient a Potion that is of mighty operation, that will either cure him, or dispatch him suddenly, if it cure not: A Physician cannot but come with a trembling hand, with such a Potion, when he knows it must work one way or other: we know God is exceeding quick with those to whom he reveals his pardoning mercy in the preaching of the Gospel, and those truths we preach, will have a quick operation either to bring you out of your sins to Salvation, or else they will quickly dispatch you for condemnation, Mark 16. 15, 16. *Go*, says Christ, *and preach the Gospel to every creature, and he that believes shall be saved: and he that believes not shall be damned.* As if Christ had said, go open the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Justification of a sinner by the freeness of the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and whosoever will come in and believe, and close with it shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned: there is no trifling in the business, he that believes and comes in shall be saved, but he that believes not shall perish, he shall be damned; let people know when they have the Gospel preach'd unto them, there is no trifling, no dallying, with it, 'tis not to be put off, he that comes in, shall be saved, but he that stands off shall perish, shall be damned, and shall know that I will fetch up my glory from him another day, in another way, As if Christ had said, Go, preach, make quick work of it, either come in and be saved, or stand out and perish: And so *John* when he came to preach the Doctrine of forgiveness of sin, *Matth.* 3. 10. says, *Now the Ax is laid to the root of the tree, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewen down and cast into the fire*: Now also the Ax is laid to the root of the tree; Why not before? No, all that while they went on in Ignorance, and understood not sin, and the grace of God brought unto them, for the pardon of their sin all that while, God let them grow, though they bore no fruit, or but ill fruit: but now also the Ax is laid to the root, —— *If he bears not good fruit now, he is hewen down and cast into the fire.* Now, when you hear of pardon of sin, and grace revealed in the Gospel, either you bring forth fruit, or

you

you do not; if you do not, God is peremptory; if you come in and imbrace the Gospel, you shall be saved; but if you do not, the Ax is laid unto your root to cut you down; the Gospel makes quick work with you, as *Paul* says in 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. it is so strong that it kills with the very savour of it, it has such a savour as it can kill with the very smell of it; *To him that believes it is the savour of life unto life, but to him that believes not, it is the savour of death unto death*, Act. 17. 30. *In the times of Ignorance God winked*, when men understood not what the evil of sin was; *but now he commands all men to repent*: before you heard the dreadful evil and malignity that is in sin, God might wink at you; but now he commands you all, having heard so many Sermons of the evil nature of sin, to repent, or else God will be very quick with you. *Heb.* 4. 12. an excellent place, *The Word of God is quick and powerful*; but what word is it? mark, in the second verse, *Unto us*, says he, *was the Gospel preached*. It was the Word of the Gospel, and verse 8. *If Jesus had given them rest*: It is that rest spoken in the Gospel; and mark what he says in the beginning; *Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left of entring into rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*. Let us therefore fear, for the Word of God is swift, and will make quick dispatch; No Sermons make such quick dispatch as Sermons of the Gospel, fear lest any seem to come short; let us fear lest any of us should go on in any way that makes it seem to appear we reject the Gospel. It is very observable what we find in Gods dealings with *Israel* of old, we never find God swearing against them, till they rejected the Land of *Canaan*, and prefer'd *Egypt* before it; when the Spies were sent forth to search the Land, and brought some of the Grapes of it, *Numb.* 13. 14. Chapters, and told them what an excellent fruitful Land it was; but because of some difficulty in the getting of it, they fell a murmuring; then God took up a solemn Oath they should not enter into it, though they had provoked him ten times, yea *forty years* in the Wilderness, yet God never sware against them till that time: That soul is in a sad condition, that God shall *swear in his wrath it shall not enter into his*

rest: Thou that walkest in the Wilderness of thy sins, and hast thy heart hardned against all the Truths of God. But now, if God has come in to thee, and opened *Canaan*, and brought you any *clusters of those Grapes*, revealed the mysteries of the Gospel and pardoning grace through Christ: If you now hang off, and be longing after the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*, fear and tremble, lest God should swear you should never enter into rest: you that are wicked, unclean persons, that went on in sin, though you had some light of Nature that caused Conscience to check you; yet God was patient, and your condition was not so dangerous then. But now, after the hearing of this grace of the Gospel and pardoning mercy, a Drunkard, an unclean person, or a vile liver now, is in a thousand times of more danger, lest God should swear against him now than before: Take heed in every act of the renewal of thy sin, thou art in danger lest God in his wrath swear against thee that thou shalt never enter into rest.

Quest. *Well, If the case be so, then you may say, What shall we do that we might not dishonour this sweet and precious grace*, but that we might honour God in it? Is this the frame of thy heart, to be careful above all things in the world, that thou mightest not dishonour this precious grace? Does thy heart work thus? *Lord, whatever I have been heretofore, though I have been a negligent vile wretch; yet for time to come, it shall be the work of my soul to give up my self unto what ever God shall speak unto me, that I may not dishonour God:* Is this the frame of thy spirit? the Lord keep it so. Now that I might direct you in this great point, I shall 1. shew who they are that are pardoned; for that will be a foundation for direction; and then 2ly, shew you what you ought to do to get it, what we are to put you upon, if you find not Evidence of it: And then 3ly, What is to be done for the honouring of the grace of God by those that have some comfortable Evidence of it.

Answ.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the several Mistakes of Men about the Pardon of their Sins.

OUr work now is to shew who they are that have their sins pardoned, for there is nothing in all the world so much concerns us, as to know how things stand with us in relation to God and our souls, whether we be pardoned or no; for a mistake in this is a wonderful mistake, and yet how many thousands are there that venture the weight of this great business upon poor, weak, and slight grounds, yea rather on meer suggestions of their own hearts: and therefore we must first labour to convince men of their mistakes about pardon of sin, and then lay down some sound Evidences of pardon, in which there may be true and solid peace. People are exceeding apt to mistake in point of pardon of sin, hoping that God has pardoned them, and that they shall not be laid to their charge, but upon very slight grounds, that will deceive them; And therefore I desire this day you would look upon your selves as arraign'd before the great God, as one day you must be: And let your hearts so hear, and attend to what we deliver, as if God should speak to you, and say, Thou sinner, such and such things thou art privy to, and hast been guilty of, What can'st thou say why the sentence of everlasting death should not be past upon thee? why God should not declare against thee according to his Law; I suppose, scarce any of you but have some hope that God will never proceed against you according to his Law; for indeed, if he do, you are undone for ever. But what are the grounds of your hopes? why you think God will not proceed against you for your sins, but will pass them by, and forgive you? Let us a little examine the grounds of it, for it is of very great Consequence, and certainly many people are now sunk down into the bottomless pit of Hell, by resting upon false grounds. I shall labour to

discover the weakness of their standing, that rest on false grounds, the

Plea. First is this, *many think that God has pardoned their sin, because it is but little they have been guilty of*; and for that they think there is a pardon in course; were I guilty of such horrible wickedness, and notorious sins, as many others are; then I think it would go hard with me; I should be afraid, things between God and me were very grievous, but the sins I have been guilty of, are no such great sins, I hope God will pass them by: God forbid I should think he were so strict as not to pass by such small sins as those that I have been guilty of. For answer to this,

Answ. 1. *Know thou dost not understand, what the evil and malignity of sin means*: If thou think'st the least sin does not make such a breach between God and thee, as all creat d power in Heaven and Earth, can never make up again: if you do not believe that all those Sermons preach'd unto you about the evil of sin, are lost unto you. But know, as a little Penknife may stab you to death, as truly as a gash of the greatest Sword, and a little shot out of a Pistol may kill you as well as a Canon bullet; So a little sin may prove your eternal ruine as well as a great one: and therefore that is no argument that God hath past by your sins, because they are little ones; and for that consider this one thing I am further speaking of:

2. *Gods pardoning mercy is his own, to do with it what he pleases*; and therefore that God may shew his prerogative, he will sometimes to some, pardon their great sins, and others he will damn for little sins; you think your sins are not so great as other mens, and therefore you think that God will forgive you; do not deceive your selves with this, God will do with his mercy what he pleases. What if he will pardon the most notorious gross sins in others, and damn thee for thy sins in thoughts? what if he will pardon the most notorious uncleanness and murder in another, and damn thee for a wanton thought? he may do it, for his mercy is his own: For this take the example of *David* and *Saul* compared together, *David* committed many sins, but especially those two of *Adultery and Murder*, and yet God pardoned him, but

Saul

Saul committed far less sins than those, and yet God cast him off for ever; the things on which God laid the casting off of *Saul* were these two sins.

1. *He did not stay till* Samuel *came*, when *Samuel* had appointed a time to come, he deferr'd it to the last minute, and *Saul* was in a great strait, he tarry'd for him long, and he thought he must not go to war except he offer'd Sacrifice before, and he ventured to offer it himself, and did not stay out the full time; he staid so long till he thought that *Samuel* would not come, and then that he did was but to offer Sacrifice to God, and yet God laies this very thing unto his charge as a cause why he would cast him off, 1 Sam. 13. 13. Samuel *tells him that God had thought to establish the Kingdom for ever unto him, But now he will not*; you are gone *Saul* for this sin. The 2. *sin in Scripture* on which God laies his casting off upon is this, *God sent him against the* Amalekites, *and bad him destroy all, but he spar'd the fat of the flock, and the King*. Now the sparing of the fat of the flock was done out of a good intention, he professes it was that the People might have of the fattest to offer in Sacrifice to God, a good intention, and yet for this God tells him, *that he would rend the Kingdom from him*, for that thing, 1 *Sam.* 15. 28. True it is, that though *Saul* was guilty of other sins, yet if you observe the story, thou shalt find that these were the two sins for which God puts the casting away of *Saul* upon. And yet *David* committed *murder* and *adultery*, and was not cast off; why? Why if God will shew his prerogative, what hath the creature to reason with him for it, if he will damn *Saul* for his sins that were less, and pardon *Davids* that were greater, what hast thou to do with that? his mercy is his own: Thou think'st it may be because thou couldst put a man off with this reason, my sins are small, and therefore I may be forgiven them because they are not so great as others; Grant it may be so, yet know that 'tis not so with God, he may pardon great sins in others, and yet thou maist perish eternally for the least sins of all, and therefore take this for a Conclusion; If thou hast no other ground for the pardon of thy sins, but because they are little ones, I pronounce in the name of

God against thee this day, thy sins are not pardoned, but stand upon the file, and thou shalt eternally perish in them, if thou hast no other ground than that, to shew for the pardon of them, and therefore never make that an argument, that they are pardoned, *because they are less than others.*

Plea. Secondly, *Others it may be will plead, my sins are not many*, we are all sinners, but I have not multiplied and increased my sins as others have done. *Answ.* I shall answer to that briefly, *know that one sin is enough to damn thee, as fully as a Million of transgressions reiterated again and again*; One chain is enough to hold thee in everlasting darkness, and God may damn thee for one sin, as well as for never so many thousands, as you have heard, he did the Angels for their first, and but one sin; and therefore though thy sins are not many, that is no argument at all. Further, we may observe in the way of Gods pardoning mercy; he pardons some that have gone a long time on in their sins, and makes quick work with others that have been but a little time in sin, and that we may see in the example of *Manasses* and *Amon*, compare those two together, in the example of *Manasses* you shall find that he reigned some 55 years; he was a notorious vile sinner against God, and yet he reigned a long time in it, his conversion was but late, 2 *Kings* 21. 1. *He was* 12. *years old, when he began to reign, and he reigned* 55. *years in* Jerusalem; and almost all this time he went on in committing most notorious abominations, and yet God pardoned him. But now mark, his Son *Amon* comes after him, and perhaps he might reason thus, my Father lived thus and thus, and for a long time had his lust and desires, and why may not I venture to do as my Father did? and so he went on in his Fathers wickedness; but now mark, *God comes presently upon him, and lets him live but two years*, and there's an end of him. *Manasses* continued 55. *years*, and his Son comes after him, and he would go on in his Fathers steps, and God presently cut him off; so though some may continue in whoredom, and in other abominations, and perhaps live in outward prosperity many years, 40. or 50. years, yet God may pass them by, and then if thou sinn'st

sinn'st after their example, he may come upon thee for the first or second act, cut thee off, and send thee down presently to Hell; and therefore do not say, my sins are but few, and therefore God will pass them by, that is no argument at all.

Thirdly, *The third false ground that others apprehend their sins are pardoned is this, because the guilt of them does not lie upon their Consciences*; they think they are not guilty of their sins, and say, they were committed a great while ago, and a long time hath past, and they heard not of them; and therefore they think they shall never hear of them more, God hath quite past them over, because they were committed a long time since, and they have not heard of them. *Answ.* Do not deceive your selves in this, for the sins that you have committed twenty, forty, or sixty years ago, though thou never heard'st of them since, it is no argument that they are pardoned; for they may be on the file in Heaven, stand there upon Record, and lie as a debt against you all, though they were committed eighty years ago; 'tis no argument a Malefactor is pardoned, because the Assize is not to morrow, or next day, 'tis true, God will have his Assize for some sooner; but for you he hath reserved it till another time; and therefore 'tis you hear not of your sins, Exod. 32. 34. *In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them*: God has his day, and perhaps his day is not come to visit; and therefore thou thinkest thou art discharged, because the day of Gods Visitation is not come to thee. And Secondly, know further, that though thy sins were committed a great while since, yet in regard of Gods Eternity, they are to him as if they were committed this morning before thou camest to the Assembly; although you committed them forty or fifty years ago, yet to God they are but as a sin committed yesterday; it may be you think your Consciences would fly in your faces, if you were drunk yesternight, and should come to the Sacrament this morning; and certainly he must be a desperate wretch, a monstrous notorious villain, that should dare to come to the Sacrament this morning that was drunk the last night, the last week, and never made his peace with God, his Conscience

Plea.

Answ.

ence may fly in his face if he were not a Monster: but now, your sins that were Committed forty or fifty years ago, know they are to God as if they were committed but this morning; for Gods eternity consists not in passing and coming, but in this, that there is no succession with God, no time past, nor time to come with God; all time to God is as a perpetual now: and therefore all thy sins that thou hast committed in time past, is in the eye of God as if they were committed this very hour; there's a great deal of need to understand this rightly, for the humbling of men and women, by causing them to look back upon their sins, and to lay them to heart; for they are thus presented before God, as if they were committed this very moment, Job 14. 16, 17. *Dost thou not watch over my sin? my transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up mine iniquity?* God watches over your sins, and will come upon you for them; they are sealed up in a bag: sometimes when I have seen the Clerk of the Assizes draw out his Indictments, such a one for murder, and such a one for Felony, it put me in mind of this Text, those Indictments against men were put up in the Clerk of the Assizes bag, it may be a good while before, and now at the Assizes they are drawn out and read openly in the face of the Court; so are thy sins all put in a bag, and God in the day of visitation he pulls them out, and reads them openly before Men and Angels. We have an example in Scripture, how God did come on men for sins committed a long while before, as the example of *Joseph's* Brethren, who sold him, and after this they went on and never heard of it till a long time after; it appears not that their Consciences were troubled till two and twenty years after they had committed that sin; till they came into *Egypt*, and were in affliction, and then their Consciences began to fly in their faces, for the sin they committed against their Brother: *Joseph* was seventeen years old when he was sold, and when he stood before *Pharaoh* he was thirty; there's thirteen years; and then seven years of plenty, and two years of famine before they came into *Egypt*, there's two and twenty years, before their Consciences did fly in their faces for their sin against their Brother: Take heed what you

do,

do; for the sins of your youth may be a torment to your old age: it may be you little think of it, but remember, when you are old God may come and reckon with you for the sins of your youth: 'tis and should be a great argument to make people to take heed of sin; for those sins thou committest now may do thee a mischief forty or sixty years hence; as in the natural body, many young men though they feel no distempers in their bodies for the present, and so care not for their diet, nor how to avoid Surfeits: yet after they grow old, then they feel their distempers in their joynts and bones, which is no other than their drunkenness and intemperance when they were young; so 'tis in regard of the soul, many in their younger years do greatly follow after wickedness, and because they hear not of it, they go away and never are troubled; but afterwards in their old age, God comes upon them for the sins of their youth: *Joab* when he was young committed sin, but when his hoary head was on him, God then came to him in wrath for it; and therefore think not all thy sins are pardoned, because 'tis a great while ago since they were committed; but rather reckon up thy former sins and bewail them, and do not rest on this ground, because 'tis long since they were committed, 'tis not to be built upon, you must look for other grounds, or else you are undone for ever, for this will certainly fail you.

Fourthly, *Other's reason that God has pardoned their sins, not only because they have been committed a great while ago, but they have had prosperity, it hath been well with them,* and God has done them good; and certainly if God had not pardoned their sins, God would never have let them thrive. I shall speak but little to this, for these reasonings are very vain, (there are others I shall more insist upon;) know this, thou makest it an argument of Gods pardoning mercy, it may rather be an argument of Gods eternal curse, for God to suffer a man to prosper much after great sins committed, it is a sign that God hath given that man over to hardness of heart, which is the most dreadful curse in the world, after God had rejected *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 14. 15. Chapters, you may read *Saul had a great deal of success in his way immediately after God had cast*

him off; so though God have cast off a man or a woman, yet that man or woman may have much success in their way; you that are Marriners, you cannot draw an argument, that because you have had a good Voyage, and have past such dangers, (though you have committed many sins,) that God is at peace with you, and that all your faults are past over; no, you may have many good successes in your Voyages, and yet perish at length for the sins you have committed in your Voyages; and so you may have good success, as *Saul* had good success in war, and yet was cast off for all that.

Fifthly, *Others say, we are not so vain to make outward prosperity an argument or ground that our sins are pardoned: but we sorrow for sin, repent of them, and turn from them, and rely on Gods mercy through Christ that our sins are pardoned*, these are arguments of a higher nature than the former; and if there be true sorrow, unfeigned repentance, reformation, and a trusting in Gods mercy through Jesus Christ, they will be good arguments indeed: but now I shall shew you there may be all these, and yet sin not pardoned; yea a relying on Christ, at least so as people may think they rely upon Christ, and yet not sin pardoned.

1. *Though these things we mentioned last may seem to be hard, yet the tryal of them is a very safe and wholsome thing*, because if you mistake in this, you are undone; you will examine Evidences for your Houses and Lands; do so in the great matters between God and your souls: And for sorrow for sin, I shall make it plain, there may be a great deal of sorrow for sin, and yet sin not pardoned; you know the example of *Ahab*, 1 King. 21. 27. to 29 verses, *And it came pass when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and went softly*; when God did but send the Prophet to tell him of his sin, presently upon the Prophets words he rent his clothes, which was a sign of extream sorrow in those times, and then he put on Sackcloth: he put off his Princely Robes, his brave Apparel, and put on Sackcloth, and that not for an outward garment, but upon his flesh, and then fasted and lay in Sackcloth, and went softly as a dejected man;

man: the pride and stoutness of his heart seem'd to be so much abated, that God takes notice of it in the 29 verse, *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me*; and because he did so, the judgement was deferred for a while, yet certainly *Ahab's* sin was not, nor ever should be pardoned, though he put on Sackcloth and humbled himself before the Lord: I appeal unto you this morning. Are not many of you hoping for pardon of sin, and yet come far short of *Ahab*? all you do in your repentance, is to say, God be merciful unto me, I am sorry, Lord forgive me, and there's an end, all's done presently; but *Ahab* went a great deal further, and yet his sin was not pardoned: Take the example of *Esau*, you know what the Scripture says of him, *He sought the blessing with tears, and yet found no place for repentance*; and in being rejected of the blessing, it was a type of his rejection of Heaven; some carry it thus, to prove there may be tears, and yet no true repentance, that is a truth; *Esau* was very much troubled, and shed many tears, and yet there was no true repentance: but I rather take the meaning of the Text this; he found no place of repentance in his Father *Isaac*; his Father *Isaac* had given the blessing to *Jacob*, and would not call it back, though he sought it with tears; there was no place for *Isaac* to recall it any more, though he shed many tears, yet he went without it; so that there may be much sorrow, and thou may'st seek the blessing with many tears, and yet God may be so turn'd against thee that there will be no place for repentance, that is, *God will not call in that that is out against thee*. And of *Judas* 'tis said when he saw *Christ was condemn'd, that he repented*: 'tis said he did repent, yet *Judas* was not pardoned; so that you see plainly, there may be repentance, and yet sin never pardoned: Indeed, true repentance hath ever pardon going along with it, but the Scripture speaks of a repentance that may be without pardon, therefore when thou say'st thou repentest, you must not look upon it so, because you repent, therefore your sins are pardoned, as if every repentance was true, for thou mistakest in the work of repentance, thou thinkest this to be repentance to Salvation, for thee to be sorry at the very heart for thy sins, certainly

tainly thou may'st be sorry at the heart, and yet perish for all that; I make no question but *Judas* was sorry at his heart, and wish'd it had never been done, and if it were to do again, he would never do it; there is as much expreſt, he repented, and he brought the 30 pieces again; he was not only sorrowful, but made satisfaction; he brought the money back again that he had got in a wicked way: and therefore if you think this to be true repentance, you are mightily mistaken, but wherein is it that we fail? It is not for me now to enter on the Doctrine of true Repentance, I am to speak of it so far as to convince men, that it is not a ground for hope of pardon of sin: Mark it, when 'tis thus with thee, thou repenteſt because thou seeſt that sin will bring thee into danger: Now, thou hast had the pleasure or the profit of it, and thou seeſt now it will bring thee into trouble and danger, thou art sorry that ever thou did'ſt it: certainly, if God would be satisfied with such kind of sorrow, he might have enough of it in Hell; for there is yelling and sorrow, because of the troubles that sin hath brought upon them: to sorrow because of the trouble that our sins bring on us is meerly natural, and flows from nature it self, and far from a saving work of repentance; therefore the repentance many hope to have, What is it? when we tell them of their sins, they say, they hope to repent; What do they mean? Why? they would take the pleasure of sin, and when the punishment comes, they would be sorry for it, and repent of it: the ordinary way to put men off from this plea, is to tell them How do you know you shall live, or that your hearts shall not be hardned? but suppoſe you do live, and that you have a heart to do as you say, yet your repentance may fail you; if your repentance be no other than that which comes for sorrow of sin, because of the punishment, it will fail you: certainly that repentance that muſt go for currant in Heaven is of another nature: poſsibly I may shew afterwards what is true and false sorrow; but for the preſent I shall shew where the mistake lies: Whoſoever therefore that builds their believing of the pardon of their sin meerly on their sorrow, and such kind of sorrow, they are like a man that would erect a great Building, and lay

lay the foundation of it in a quagmire, or on the sand, as the Scripture speaks, when storms come, the building falls; I shall speak hereafter to those that build on the Sand; but these build on a Quagmire, on a few tears, sorrow and trouble of spirit they have upon the apprehension of punishment of sin: this building will fall in time of straits and danger; and this is the reason why people that depend upon sorrow never have peace: for how can I tell the measure of sorrow I am to have before peace be spoken, and then if they feel not sorrow, they are questioning again: it is a dangerous thing to lay the hopes of pardon of sin upon our own sorrows; where or how then shall we lay our hopes? why, upon the sorrows of Jesus Christ, there you shall find the surest ground (there may be some mistake there too, but for the present I shall not stay on that) we must look ten thousand times more at the sorrows of Christ than at our own sorrows; and therefore when your hearts are troubled, and you look for mercy, depend more ten thousand times on the sorrows of Christ than on all your own sorrows; for your sorrows for sin cannot satisfie Gods Justice; and that that must be a ground of hope for the pardon of my sin, must be something that must satisfie the justice of God; for though there be never so much sorrow, yet it will not satisfie Gods justice; and consider further, *True sorrow rather follows the work of Justification than preceeds it*; as thus, *I am not therefore pardoned because I mourn; but because I am pardoned, therefore I come to mourn*: so stands the Truth in Divinity in point of Justification and Repentance: you pervert the order, if you think because you mourn, and are a little sorrowful, that therefore you shall be pardoned; the truth is, if your mourning and sorrow be a work of true saving grace, you mourn and sorrow because you are justified; sorrow of true repentance rather flows from pardon, than pardon from it; when God pardons sin, he lets out the graces of his Spirit, and then comes sorrow as a fruit or Evidence of Gods pardoning love and Reconciliation; for though God may give outward favours to a man that is not pardoned; yet God never gives his Spirit to work any saving grace in the heart till he is reconciled;

conciled: 'tis a fruit of his pardoning grace and favour, and because he has justified thee, he sends his Spirit to work sorrow and repentance: Many think Justification flows from sorrow, but thou must come to sorrow and repentance another way: know that all true sorrow flows from Justification; all that sorrow before Justification, it is but Legal sorrow, and reveals something that may hinder the soul from Christ, as sin, and the terrors of the Law, and the wrath of God; but it does not intereſt the soul in Christ; this I affirm as most certain Divinity, that there is no sorrow whereby any soul is intereſted and planted in Christ; the sorrow that is wrought in them before Justification, in order of nature, may be a means to bring them to God, and make them enquire after Christ, and stir up their hearts to take away those things that do hinder from Christ, but it does not intereſt the soul in Christ: you do not understand the way of the Gospel, if you think that sorrow intereſts the soul in Christ; no, that must be by faith laying hold on him for Justification, and then comes sorrow of repentance after; thou may'ſt see thy self an undone wretch for sin, and lost for ever, and nothing in the world can quiet thee; all this may be by the work of the Law: but then God comes and shews thee his grace in Christ, and enables thee to close with it for Justification, and then comes in Evangelical sorrow, mourning and melting sorrow more than ever before: but now it comes in another way from the Spirit of God melting the soul, because it hath sinned againſt Jesus Christ, who hath so graciously appeared to it in his pardoning mercy to the soul; so that now you sorrow because you are pardoned, for it comes as a fruit of faith laying hold of the pardoning grace of God; and then there is no such argument in the world to melt the heart with sorrow, as when faith tells the soul that sin is pardoned; and though thy sorrow was little before, and now is greater, thou need'ſt not be troubled, if God make thy humiliations greater for sin after the knowledge of thy pardon; for the revelation of Gods grace in the pardon of thy sin, is the most excellent means to humble the soul in the world: the sorrows of Gods Children after pardon, as they work on their own hearts, so on Gods heart

heart too; God is mightily taken with it: when once thy sins are pardoned, then God makes thy heart melt to him as his does to thee: but the sorrow of one that is an Enemy to God does not soften Gods heart; there is a great deal of difference between the sorrow of Gods Children, and the sorrow of others; they make sorrow the ground of pardon, this God accepts not: 'tis true, you may sorrow for sin, because it may be a means to bring you to Christ; but that that Justifies the soul is Union with Christ by Faith, and all that sorrow that works Repentance to Salvation flows from Gods grace in Christ, having Justified you. Justification is the first thing that estates thee in blessedness; sorrow does not first state thee in a blessed condition, but is meerly a fruit of that blessedness thou art stated in: certainly these things are the Truths of God: so that when you look for blessedness any other way, you look for it meerly in a natural way, or as a Heathen may do; a Heathen knows he ought not to offend God, and he knows he had need to have mercy from God, and that he ought to be sorrowful for his sins; I might give you many examples for it, but I must hasten: those then that seek after pardon of sin this way, do but seek for it meerly in a natural way.

Secondly, *Others say, I am not only sorry for my sins, but I reform, and is not this a ground of pardon?* Know likewise, that there may be a leaving of sin, and yet sin not pardoned; for that take the example of *Herod*, 'tis said, *He heard John Baptist gladly, and reformed in many things*; he was a great deal the better for *John's* Ministry, and yet *Herod* was not pardoned; this is a notable example for you that come to hear Sermons, and seem to be much affected, let me ask you in the Name of God, and let Conscience answer, What is it you reformed since you heard all those Sermons of the Evil of Sin, and now of the Pardon of sin? What Evils have you reformed in your families, and in your own hearts? I cannot but hope that many of you may say, through grace these and these evils were in my family before, but now I have reformed them; and these evils I did before, but now I have left them; I hope many can say so, and blessed be God for this

this fruit of our Ministry if any thing be reform'd, if Sabbaths be better kept, and Duties in family set up, and private Exercises of Religion performed; that you are not so proud, passionate, and froward as before: O that it may be said so, 'tis worth our labour to restrain sin, that God may not be so much dishonoured, if there were no more done: but we preach for further and higher ends, that souls would not stay in reforming; for *Herod* heard *John Baptist*, and did many things; and *Judas* cast away the money, he repented and would not keep the money, there was a kind of reformation in both *Herod* and *Judas*; but this is no ground to build upon for pardon of sin; *As those that depended on their sorrow for pardon, built on the quagmire; so those that depend on their reformation, build upon the sand*; the one by his sorrow and trouble for sin, seems as it were to be in the work of humiliation, is like a man that digs deep for a foundation, but does not cast out the old mould, but builds upon it; the other seems like one that not only digs deep, but casts out the old rubbish, and brings in new mould, new earth: lays by and casts away his former sins, and does the contrary good; but now, though they go further than the former in casting out the old rubbish, and bringing in of new earth, yet after all this is done they build upon it, and do not build upon the Rock Christ; they bring in the new earth of their own Performances and Duties, and this they build upon, and do not build upon the Rock Christ for the *pardon of their sins, and Justification of their souls before God*, and here they fail, and this is their undoing, their mistake in this; and yet it is most sure, that every one of us would mistake in this; if God did not reveal in the Gospel another way to receive Pardon and Justification in his Son, we should certainly all of us rest here, and go no further; no man or woman in the world, that never heard the Gospel went further than this, and so far one may go without the Gospel; we may dig deep, cast out the old rubbish, and bring in new earth, this we may do, and not hear of the Gospel: And therefore we have a great deal of cause to bless God that we may hear the mysteries of the Gospel opened unto us, for certainly we should else go no further,

further, and if we go no further, we should certainly perish; and therefore if we go but thus far, it is not building on the Rock Christ; hence the ground and bottom of faith for Justification cannot be in Reformation, or in any thing in the creature, it must be in something above and without us, and yet by faith, (wrought in us) though without us; I mean the Rock Christ, and the Foundation that is laid for the forgiveness of our sin in Christ, that must be the Foundation of our faith, and not in what we do our selves: For

1. *Know, that all Reformation in the world will not satisfie for the evil that you have done for the time past*: this I would convince you of, and be you willing to hear it, it may be of great use to you; when we preach Christ and free grace, it is to bring you to Christ; our preaching down of works is not to keep you from doing of them, but from resting in them: that which I aim at, is to bring you into an enquiring frame of spirit, a restless condition, that so we may bring you to that which is the true rest; and we shall be as glad to bring you into the true rest, as now to bring you into restlessness. Know, all Reformations for time to come, will not satisfie God for time past, it will not: amongst men, if you have run into arrerages with your Landlord for Rent, and you bring him a quarters Rent when there's three or four quarters behind, or may be two or three years, if you should think to pay the Rent of two or three years with bringing the last quarter, it would be accounted a foolish conceit, so would it be, if with God you should think the duties you do at present, should satisfie for all the arrerages you have run into for time past: you do not understand Gods way, if you think that God will be satisfied for all that is past by what you do at the present. Suppose what you do now were perfect, and for all time to come you never committed one sin against God any more, yet all this would not satisfie for time past, this looks but at time to come, and does not at all take off any thing for the time past: Besides, you may see matter enough in your best Reformations for God to condemn you, not only for your former sins, but sins in your reforming, but if there were no sin in that, that would be no satisfaction for that which is

is past: Mark this, *That which must be the ground of the pardon of thy sin, must be that that must satisfie for thy sin past, and for all thy sins to come*; and that was opened unto you in opening the mysteries of godliness in the Pardon and Justification of a sinner.

2. *Know this, that God accepts of duties, not for the duties themselves, but because he accepts of the person that performs them*; God does not accept of the duties, and then of the person, that is not Gods way; but he accepts first of the person, and then of the actions: God never accepts of what we do, till he accepts of our persons; *As* Abel, *God had regard to* Abel's *person first, and then to his offerings*; so God has first regard to the person of any man, and then to his Offerings: thou thinkest thou art a poor wretched creature, and then thou thinkest it may be, if I had such and such parts, and could do thus and thus, then God would accept of me, I tell thee, all thy parts and performances are cast away, till God accept of thy person. *St. Paul was blameless according to the Law, and yet he accounted all lost for Christ*, for he knew, that when God revealed the Gospel to him, that he could not be accepted for his righteousness, but his person must first be accepted, and then his righteousness: So that the way of new Obedience, and the work of Sanctification, are the qualifications of the man that is justified, but not the conditions required for the Justification of his person; It is not that that justifies the soul, the Justification of the soul comes not through these, but these flow from Justification; and until a soul understands this, he never rightly performs duties. Therefore further, to conclude this, though good Works and new Obedience are *good Nurses unto faith*; yet if you make these *the Mother of your faith*, your faith is but a bastard faith, these are not the right Mother of Faith: if your faith be begotten out of your Duties and Performances, and your faith have no other Mother than these, then your faith is illegitimate, and not true born, it has not the right Mother; *The right Mother of faith, is the manifestation of the freeness of Gods grace in the Covenant of the Gospel, shewed unto the Soul through the mediation of the Son*

of

of God: this laid open to the eye of the soul, by the mighty work of the Spirit of God, raises and creates faith in the soul; this is the generation of true saving faith, *the faith of Gods Elect*, as the Scripture speaks; Duties and Performances cannot be the Mother of it; it is of a higher birth than that birth that arises out of Parts, Duties, or Performances whatsoever; thy faith will not inherit, if it be base born; through faith we come to inherit the Promises, and if thy faith hath no other foundation than thy sorrows and reformation, thy faith is illegitimate, and not that that shall inherit; 'tis not of the right kind that will bring thee unto Salvation: thus you see what mistakes there may be in this great Point of the Justification of a Sinner, and in being made blessed; and therefore we had need look to it to be sure, that what we rest upon will hold, lest when we come to lay claim, and make challenge of blessedness, our hold deceive us: Many think the main matters of Religion to be nothing but believing in Jesus Christ, and crying God mercy: you see by these things that I have spoken, that there had need be much workings of spirit in the way of Religion, and mighty strong teachings of the Holy Ghost to lead the soul, for there may be many mistakes, and to prevent and remove those mistakes that lie in the way to get peace with God, 'tis a matter of great concernment, and not a slight business to be done suddenly.

3. *Others say, we trust in the mercy of God, and in this* I am to speak to two sorts: First, those that are most grossly *ignorant*, that have no other ground to hope for pardon of sin, but because they hear that God is a merciful God: know thus much, that notwithstanding what you hear of God, that he is merciful, and not willing that men should perish; yet the Scripture reveals clearly to us, that notwithstanding God is gracious and merciful, yet the greatest part of the world perish in their sins, there is nothing more clear than this, that most people in the world do perish, and therefore to say God is merciful, is not enough, you may be sorry for sin, reform, and say, God is merciful, and yet

perish: if these three were enough, what needed the Son of God to come, and take our nature upon him, and be made a curse for Mans sin, lay down his life, and shed his precious blood, why might not these three have been joyned together, and so Christ never have come? for though Christ had never come, I might have been sorrowful, and I might have reformed and said God is merciful, though Christ had never come: those that never knew Christ nor heard of him yet, they may be sorrowful, reform, and say God is merciful. I beseech you consider this note, *I can never be pardoned and saved, in such a way, as it might be done, though Christ had never come*; I can then never be pardoned and saved by all the means I take for pardon and Salvation, if those things might be done though Christ had never come; and if you have nothing else but them to rest upon, then you can never be saved; put this to your hearts, what have I wrought in my heart, that I might not have had, if Christ had not come into the world; certainly the most things that most people have to rest upon, for pardon and salvation; they might have had though Christ had never come into the world. *Further, Thou saist God is merciful*, True, the mercy of God is sweet and a blessed argument, and our souls much delight to open the grace and mercy of God; and I have endeavoured to open to you what is revealed in the Gospel; yet Gods mercy is free, though he delight to glorifie his mercy: *and he hath thousand thousands of Subjects, to glorifie his mercy in, though thou perish eternally*. Though thou perish eternally, yet God may be glorious in the blessedness of his mercy: God hath others to magnifie his mercy unto besides thee: a beggar comes and asks an alms of a man, and he gives him none, that is not an argument the man is not merciful, for he hath other objects, that are more suitable and fit, though he give not to every one, 'tis no dishonour to his compassion: so it is with God, he hath thousands of objects to bestow his mercy on, though thou perish. Further, Thou saist God is merciful, and therefore thou hop'st for pardon: Why? God is and hath been merciful to thee beyond all that thou canst conceive, God hath shew'd his mercy to thee already: thou

saist God is merciful, true, or else thou hadst not been alive at this present: that thou shouldst hear and see, and have all thy members whole, and the use of all thy senses, and that thou shouldst stand here this day under the means of grace, and that thou shouldst hear God call on thee to repent, and believe in his Son, while thou walk'st on in thy sin, and art dead in sins and trespasses: he sends his son and spirit to thee, to tell thee that he would rescue thee, and give life unto thee; again, is not here rich mercy, perhaps thou hast had thy portion of mercy already, that God intends for thee, yea so much mercy, that all the Angels and Saints will give acclamations to God, for that mercy thou hast had, though thou perish, God hath many ways shew'd mercy to thee, in so much as that the very Devils themselves will acknowledge that God was very good to his poor creatures.

Further, *Thou speakest of mercy, hast not thou abused and turn'd mercy into wantonness?* perhaps the mercy thou speakest of, now is at this very present pleading to God against thee, saying, How have I been abused by this wretched man? the more my beauty and excellency hath been displayed, the more wicked he hath grown; what if mercy be now pleading against thee? even those mercies that thou hast abused, and therefore thou hadst need to look for somewhat else to settle thy soul upon than this, to say that God is merciful; this is the *first sort, those that are grosly Ignorant.*

Secondly, *There are others that mourn, pray and reform, and then have some kind of reliance on God to pardon them, for his mercies sake*; and therefore to them I shall say thus much. *Know, the mercy of God must be received after God's own way*; he hath appointed the communications of it, and so it must be received, otherwise it can never attain to such an effect as the pardon of thy sin, note this, that all the mercy in God considered, as he is Creator of Heaven and Earth, and not let our thoughts rest Mediator Christ Jesus God-man, it never wrought to the pardon of any one sin, and therefore if you look upon the mercy of God, and do not look to the right way of the conveyance of it, you may most dangerously mistake: The ground and bottom of faith, that

justifies is not merely to cast ones self on the mercy of God, (for there is none, but in a natural way know that God is a merciful God) but the main ground of Justification, or of justifying faith, is the free grace of God through Jesus Christ; *That God is merciful through a Mediator*: Otherwise the ground of your faith is but on a meer confused notion of the mercy of God, which will certainly fail you; a heathen may have as much to be the ground of his faith, that the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, pities those that are in misery, and I am a poor creature in misery, I'le cry to him, and I'le reform my life, and I'le rely on him; thus far a heathen may go; but the ground and bottom of faith is not the mercy of God in general, but the mercy of God in and through a Mediator, observe a little further, the ground of justifying faith is not thus, that God for Christs sake will forgive me for what Christ hath done to purchase my pardon, but there is another work of faith in the souls of believers, though the soul apprehend it not; 'tis not the work of faith in justification, to believe that Christ hath paid so much as my debt comes to; but thus, the work of faith is to bring the soul unto Christ, and to pitch it upon the *person of Christ, to be made mine first, and then the righteousness of Christ to be mine*: Tis not thus, I believe this is my debt, and there is so much money to pay it; but this is the work of faith, to bring thee *to be married* to such a person; and so the debt is transacted on him to whom thou art married, and he will discharge the debt, because thou art married to him, so that the ground of faith is not to look unto God meerly through his son that so I may have pardon; but thus, I must come to have Christ to be mine; I must be married with Christ, and so through my union with the person of Christ, I come to have all that Christ hath done and suffered to be made over to me; and therefore when I come to look upon the riches of the grace of God in the mediation of his son, I must come with an eye of faith, to be married unto Christ, and Christ with me. The riches of Gods grace in Christ was opened before, we now make use of it as a trial to shew the danger of false grounds in relying upon God for pardon.

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Further, *Though it be through the mercy of God to pardon sin*; yet it does not work thus, *viz.* You have sinned, and my law requires such and such obedience, to be performed on such terms, or else you must perish, *but I through my mercy will remit something* of the rigour and strictness of the Law. And most people confess, that by the strictness of the Law they are condemn'd, but they hope the mercy of God will grant some remission of the Law; as it is with men, if all Penal statutes should be executed it would be very hard; but there is a Chancery to abate something of the rigour, and strictness of penal statutes; and thus men think to come to have pardon, and deal with God after the manner of men; you think the crying to God for mercy will abate something of the strictness, and severity of the Law; but you mistake in taking this way to get peace and reconciliation with God, to look upon Gods mercy to lye in this, to remit something of the strictness and severity of the Law: No but the work of Gods mercy lies in this, *to find out a surety for you, and to transfer the debt upon him.*

Further, *Consider the work of Gods mercy in justification of a sinner, when faith lays hold upon it, faith must not lay hold upon it as a meer single Act*; *but look at all the concomitants of the work of Gods grace, in making way for the justification of a sinner*: The mercy of God works many ways, and faith must exercise it self on Gods grace, according to the multiplicity of the work of it, in bringing about the Justification of a sinner; as thus, you have sinned and you cry to God for pardon, but the mercy of God does not work thus to pardon you, as 'tis a single Act, but the mercy of God works thus to mankind. First, *he is pleased to enter into a second covenant* with mankind after he had broken the first. *A second work of Gods mercy, is to set his wisdom on work to find out a way how mankind should be reconciled unto him*, and his sin pardoned, and yet that God should be no loser; this was the work of his infinite wisdom. And *Thirdly, when this is found out, there can be done no other way, but only through the Son of God* taking mans nature upon him, and suffering for him; then here's the mercy of God, to be willing to lend his Son to mediate for poor creatures; and then a

further

further mercy *in giving thy soul to his Son*, he sent not his Son that all might be pardoned, but a certain number that God the Father had given to his Son from all eternity; now there's a great work of Gods mercy in passing by others, and giving thee to his Son: And further, *It is a work of Gods mercy in the powerful Ministry of the Gospel to reveal this*: And then further, *it is a work of Gods mercy to draw thee to close with his Son*, and thereby to unite and marry thee to his Son: And then further, *It is a work of Gods mercy to assure thee of the pardon and justification of thy soul*, 'tis a great deal more for faith to look upon God in this manner, than to come in such a way as this, God is merciful, and I trust in his grace that he will pardon me; we mistake mightily about the mercy of God, when we do not look upon it in an Evangelical way, as it is revealed in the Gospel: Further, know thus much, that if Gods mercy will work so far for thee, as to pardon thy sin, and save thy soul: certainly it will work so far as to take away the power of sin, and let thee not live in the filth of thy sin: Many think Gods mercy will do great matters hereafter, but nothing now in comparison of what he will do hereafter, they think he will give them outward blessings now, but keep spiritual things till hereafter: Certainly this is an infallible truth, if Gods mercy work not so powerfully here in this world as to bestow spiritual good things on thee, thou may'st be assured that it will never work so powerful on thee as to save thy Soul in the World to come; Can it be thought a Prince pardons a Malefactor that he shall not be hang'd, and yet suffer him to lie in the Prison and rot in a Dungeon? this were but a poor pardon, a half pardon, to be delivered from the Gallows and rot in the Prison: Certainly, what ever a Prince may do, God never pardons a sinner so; to shew him mercy to save him from Hell, and yet to lie rotting all his life long in sin; no, God when he pardons he delivers and shakes off the fetters, as we shall see further; therefore thou that say'st thou hopest in Gods mercy that he will pardon thee; let me ask, What hath he done for thee? if thou

thinkest

thinkest that Gods mercy will work so strongly hereafter to save thy soul, certainly it will be as strong for thee here to sanctifie thee; if it work not so strong on thee now as to sanctifie thee, certainly it will never work so strongly for thee hereafter as to save thee.

4. *Others say in the last place, we are not only sorry for sin and reform and trust in Gods mercy, but we relie upon Gods mercy through Christ; and therefore we hope we shall be pardoned:* this I might speak much to; we must rest there, but there is a mistake there too; the relying on Christ is not relying on him by acting of some transient thoughts that passes over, but it is an abiding thing; when men hear there is no way to be saved but by Christ, and they cannot deny it, and because they are loth to think they are such as cannot be saved, they are loth to have such ill thoughts of themselves, and hearing this is the way, and no other, therefore they will perswade themselves that they shall find mercy through Christ: Now what great work is this so to rely on Crrist? the work of faith is a mighty work, it is not a short transient work, a few thoughts upon thy heart to be saved by Christ; No, whereſoever faith is right, and a true reliance on Christ, it is a mighty work of the Spirit of God, working this grace in raising the soul higher than it self, and carries it through and above all difficulties, when it brings the soul to relie upon God. There may be great mistakes, when people say, they rely upon Christ; and therefore take this for conviction, *Relying on Christ is not barely to think my sins are pardoned by Christ: but it is a receiving of Christ, a possessing of Christ, a coming into Christ, a living in Christ, and a bringing Christ to live in me,* 'tis eating of the flesh of Christ, and drinking of his blood, and so finds nourishment and strength from him as really as the body by the meat and drink it takes, that abides with it, is strengthned by it; so does faith to the soul: therefore faith is not a slight notion like water running through a Pipe that leaves nothing behind it; for so the thoughts of most people are; but it is such a thing, *as brings Christ into the soul, and the soul into Christ, and so feeds and lives upon him*; this is relying upon Christ for pardon; so as to have the concomitants and conſe-

sorts of pardon continually going along with it: Now you have heard these things, go away and beseech God to settle things aright in your souls. Say to your hearts, Lord I see that feeling of the heart aright upon Christ for justification and pardon of sin, is another manner of business than I was aware of, and I am perswaded that if I had died before, I should certainly have dyed under some of these mistakes; Lord, settle my heart aright in this great business. Do not go away with such thoughts as these; the Minister speaks of such mistakes, but I hope it is far otherwise; do not venture to put off what we say with such slight thoughts, when we speak unto you we speak in the Name of God, and it is a horrible taking of the Name of God in vain, if we examine not what we say unto you by the Word; And therefore know you are charged this day in the Name of God to look to it, and to examine your hearts what grounds you go upon for the pardon of your sin, that you may not mistake; in which we shall give you some further help in laying down some positive grounds that you may rest upon for the pardon of your sin.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the true Evidences of Forgiveness of Sin.

But if it be asked, Who are they that have their sins pardoned? surely they are not many, this Text puts it in the singular number, *Blessed is he that hath his sin pardoned*, and by that which hath been delivered about the mistakes, it appears there are not very many; but yet some there are, and this is the work of this day, in the Name of the Lord to declare to some poor souls this day their sins are pardoned; this is the message from the Lord I am to speak to them (I hope divers in this place) as from Christ, *Son and Daughter be of good comfort, thy sins are pardoned*. And blessed is that man or woman that this day shall hear the joyful

joyful sound, in their hearts, and that shall have the *Spirit of God witness unto their spirits*, that as I have heard, so I have felt this day, that what signs of forgiveness of sin have been delivered, I have felt them in my own soul; Well then, *What are they? to insist upon them.* The

First is that the Apostle gives in Rom. 8. 30. *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified.* Justification consists especially in the remission and pardon of sin; Now the Holy Ghost says, *whom he hath called, them he hath justified*; would you know that you are justified, and that your sins are pardoned, the Spirit of God shews you, it is not a voice of mine, but it is that which comes from the Holy Ghost, whom he hath called, them he hath justified; *Vocation* is a certain Evidence of *Justification*; this Vocation or Calling is the second link that does unite those two links of that golden chain together mentioned in that place, the first link is the foreknowledge of God, *Gods Predestination*, and then there is *Vocation* the next, after that *Justification*, and then *Glorification*; the first chain in the link is, that God from all Eternity predestinates some persons to have their sins pardoned, but there is Vocation comes in between Predestination and Justification, and after that Glorification, so that while I am giving Evidences of Justification here in this Text, I shall give Evidences of Predestination and Glorification too; for these are link'd all together: Many People look only after Justification, they hope their sins are pardoned, but they look not to any other link of the chain, as Calling and Vocation; whom he hath called, them he hath justified, but the question then is, *What is that Calling?* What do you mean by that, how shall we know whether we be called or no? In 2 Pet. 1. 10. he bids them there to *give diligence to make their Calling and Election sure*; Mark, as here Predestination and Calling are put together, so their Calling and Election, says he, Give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: Election is first sure in respect of God, but Vocation is first in regard of our selves, make that sure, and then you make Election sure, Justification sure, and Glorification sure too, then what is Voca-

tion? for answer to the Question, *Know, there is an outward call and an inward call*; when God sends the Ministers of the Word to reveal the Gospel, and the way of Salvation, that is no other but Gods calling mens souls from the ways of sin and death to come into the ways of life; all that come to hear the sound of the Gospel preach'd unto them, let them know, that is Gods call to sinners to come in and repent; God calls to the Drunkard, the Unclean person; and all others that live in sin to repent; when you come to hear the Word, God calls you, and God requires of you, as you would have God to hear your cry when you are calling for mercy in the day of your distress; hear my call, now I call and cry in the Ministry of the Word; Would you have me to hear you when you cry to me? do you hear me now I am calling to you; O that People would understand the Ministry of the Word, that it is the call of God for sinners to return and repent of their sins, that they would look beyond man, and know that it is the voice of God by them, and therefore it is a dangerous thing for People to neglect, resist, or rebel against the Ministry of the Word; and there is some good hopes that God hath some souls in such a place that he intends everlasting good will unto, where he sends the Ministry of the Word; God does not use to send the call of the Gospel to a place, but there are some souls to be called: And therefore,

Secondly, *Besides the Outward Call, there is an Inward Call*, and that is it the Apostle speaks of: Many have the outward Call of the Word to Faith and Repentance, and yet they perish eternally: But those whom God intends to save and hath love to indeed, he comes to them with an Inward Call, and this Inward Call of God is on this wise: God beholds the poor wretched sinner going on in the ways of sin, death, and perdition, and he comes to him by a secret and powerful voice, speaking to his very heart, *O Sinner, consider where thou art, What art thou a doing? Whither art thou a going? What is the end of thy way like to be? thou art going from God, from happiness and life, to woful misery and blackness of darkness, to the infinite gulf of eternal Perdition; O turn, turn, O*

sinner out of these vile abominable dangerous ways, or else thou art undone for ever: Behold here is the way of life set before thee; behold my Son sent into the world for the Propitiation of thy sin, and to bring thee into the ways of godliness, which is the way to eternal life; O turn sinner into these ways: Now this voice of God calling to the Soul of a man or woman, it comes with power, it hath an over-powering strength in it, to prevail upon the heart; it is much like that secret voice mentioned in Isai. 30. 21. *And thy Ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way walk in it, when you turn to the right hand, or to the left*; 'tis a Promise of Gods mercy unto his People to convert them unto himself, those that were only in an Outward Profession, says God, you shall hear a voice behind you, saying, this is the way, turn in unto it; and so 'tis when God calls a sinner from the ways of death and destruction; such a sinner hears a voice behind him; it may be he has come many times to Sermons, and heard a voice many times *without him* and *before him*; but never before, a voice *within him* and *behind him*, an inward secret voice speaking to the soul, *O sinner turn out of thy sinful ways; Why wilt thou die and perish eternally?* for God to come thus secretly, and to reason with the soul, by a voice behind it; and 'tis not bare reasoning, but a voice that hath a power and efficacy from God going along with it, that carries on this work in the soul, and causes the heart to listen and to yield unto God; when God calls to the Soul to come into the ways of life, the Soul answers, *Lord I come*, and with a trembling frame of heart cries out with *Saul* at his Conversion, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* No more now, what sin will have me to do? and what this and that, and the other sin will have me to do? No, now I see the ways of Life and Salvation are the only blessed ways; *Now Lord, what would'st thou have me to do?* Now Salvation is come to that Soul, and Reconciliation with Jesus Christ; *For whom he hath called, them he hath justified.* Observe the efficacy of that call spoken of in Isai. 30. 21. *Thine Ears shall hear a word behind thee*, &c. and then follows the fruits of it, *and ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images with Silver, and the ornament of*

thy molten Images of Gold, thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous Cloth; and shalt say unto it, get thee hence; the sins they before lived in was Idolatry, and their hearts were much taken with their brave Images over-laid with Silver and Gold; but when they heard the voice behind them, they look'd upon those things they so much delighted in, that were so brave in their eyes before, but as menstruous clothes, which are the most filthiest things that can be, and cast them away as filthy rags, with indignation, saying, get thee hence; as one that takes a rag in his hand, and looks on it and sees it all filthy and defiled, presently he throws it away with abomination, and says, get thee hence, so this is the call of God, when the Soul hears behind it a secret voice that many hear not, it may be, many thousands hear the outward voice of the Minister telling them of the evil of sin, and their abominations, and a poor Servant, or a poor Youth that stands in the midst of the crowd, he hears a voice behind him [illegible] others do not, a secret voice (besides the general voice) which is a prevailing voice, that the soul falls down and yields presently, before he goes out of the Church, and says, *Lord this day thou hast convinc'd me of the evil of sin, and thou hast this day shewed me the way of life and salvation, Lord I come unto thee*; though he saw nothing, and though no body else hear that voice, yet there is a secret voice of God unto the soul, though he stand in the midst of the crowd and no body else hear it, yet at that instant pardon of sin came to that soul, and reconciliation by Jesus Christ: now when this comes into the soul, he will not let such and such sins be there any longer, but says, *Get you hence, I will have no more to do with such and such beloved lusts and Idols that I set my heart upon, Get thee hence*; and those men that God calls to himself, certainly when they *hear this voice behind them*, though they now plead for Idolatry and Superstition, and why should not we do as our forefathers did? yet if once they come to hear this secret voice of God, and God shew them the way of his Worship in the purity and beauty of it, they will say, get thee hence, to those things, as vile things, get ye hence, I will have no more to do with

you;

you; this is the way in the ordinary call of God, and though God sanctifie some from the womb, yet afterwards by a mighty work of the Spirit he discovers unto them what the soul is by nature; there is somewhat like this even in those that are sanctified from the womb, though God in an extraordinary way draw the soul out from sin into the ways of life, but generally there are in the ordinary way of Gods working, these *three or four voices calling to the soul.* 1. *Says God to the soul, O soul thou art made for God, and for Eternity.* 2. *O soul thou art now in the ways of Hell*, and of eternal perdition, and must of necessity perish in it. 3. *O soul, behold here are the ways of life* and salvation reveal'd unto thee, and set before thee in the Gospel of my Son. And lastly, *O soul come in, and thou shalt have favour and acceptation in my Son*; these are the four voices in Gods call; I do not say every one hears them plainly and distinctly, yet they do for the substance of them in the ordinary way of the dispensation of Gods grace: Every soul that God justifies they are thus called of God, and 'tis a prevailing call, that brings them in to submit unto it: Again, concerning this call of God, because the Scripture speaks much of it, I shall shew a little further; mark it, That soul that once hears the call of God to bring it into the ways of life, *that soul will evermore depend upon Gods call in all other things*; if God hath called me out of the ways of death, into the ways of life, in obedience to that call that my soul hath yielded to, I shall be evermore under the power of Gods call in all other things, let God call me to what he will, to what service he pleases, to whatsoever difficulties and sufferings he shall think meet, my soul is content, and says, *Here I am, Lord speak, thy servant hears.* Now for a soul to be so under God, as to wait upon the call of God to any duty, service, and imployment, that it dares not go about any thing but according to the call of God; this is a good Evidence that such a soul hath been acquainted with that great call of God, that powerful call of God to bring him off from the ways of sin into the ways of life and salvation. Further, those that have been acquainted with this call of God, *there is an answerable frame*

and

and disposition in their hearts, to call upon the Name of God for assistance, direction, and a blessing on all they undertake; they delight now to repair unto God and call upon him; as God calls unto them, so they call unto him; for that is the way of God according to his work in the soul, he puts a gracious frame into the soul answerable to it; As in Election, those whom he elects, when God calls them home he puts a gracious disposition in their hearts for to elect him; as God chooses the soul from the world, so the soul chooses God above all things in the world, the soul answers to God: God sets his heart on the soul, and says, I will choose thee for me, the soul again sets its heart upon God, and says, I will choose thee for my God; as God calls the soul to come and live to him in the ways of grace, while he lives in this world; so the soul calls on God for his assistance, that he would give his help in unto him on all occasions; and therefore the Scripture gives us this expression for the whole Worship of God, Rom. 10. 13. *Whosoever calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved*; that soul that is acquainted with Gods call, that soul calls on God again: And by the way, those that are thus called, are fittest for Church-Communion; I mention this, because the word translated Church comes from a *Greek* word that signifies to call out; that which in Scripture is usually called a Church, signifies nothing else but this, a Company of People called out of the ways of sin to the embracing the ways of godliness; so that the Church should consist of People called out of the ways of sin, by the powerful and efficacious voice of the Spirit of God; and they that are thus called have their sins pardoned; you say, you hope God hath justified you; you read what God says, and what hath been presented unto you; they who are called they are justified; then Calling, in order of nature, goes before Justification; this you will find in your own hearts, and if not, this you must do, when ever you come before God to hear the outward call, you must come with a waiting frame of heart to hear the inward call, and call upon God with such a disposition; say, Lord I have been taught that there is an outward call of thine in the Word, and an inward call, and I am going this

day

day to hear thy Word calling me out of the ways of sin, Oh that I might have together with that the inward call of thy Spirit, when shall I hear that secret voyce! this is the reason, though I have been convinced many times at the hearing of the Word, yet my sin hath prevail'd against me, because that inward secret powerful voyce hath not come to my soul; that is the first Evidence, *whom he hath justified, them he hath called.* A

Second Evidence is this, *Whomsoever God pardons he receives into Covenant with himself*; all pardoned sinners are Covenanters with God: God pardons no soul but such an one as he brings into the Bond of the Covenant with himself; that is the way of the conveyance of the grace of God for the pardon of sin, to bring the soul into the Bonds of the Covenant; the Scripture is evident in this, that forgiveness of sin is made a special fruit of the New Covenant, that is clear enough, Jer. 31. 33. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel*, &c. what is the special end of that Covenant? *I will forgive their Iniquities, and remember their sins no more*; But how does that come in? it comes in by way of Covenant, *I will make a New Covenant*; I will first receive them into Covenant, and then they shall have the fruit of this New Covenant, that their sins shall be forgiven, and their iniquities remembred no more. The New Covenant is a mystery to most people, and yet it is a certain truth, the pardon of thy sin, and thy eternal good depends upon it; thou art one that God has brought into Covenant with himself, if thou beest or ever shalt be pardoned, as God will manifest to thy soul, that he hath through his Son tyed and bound himself to thee to be thy God, that whereas before thou wer't departed from him, and an enemy to him, yet now he is pleased to call thee to enter into a second Covenant after thou had'st broken the first, and wer't cast off by reason of that breach, God is contented to enter into a second Covenant with thee, to be thy God in and through his Son; thou art to come in and joyn in this Covenant; for to a full Covenant there must be assent on both sides, there must be a mutual ingagement of either

parties; when God reveals this to thy soul, that though thou be by nature an Enemy to me, and hast broken the first Covenant that I made with the Children of men, and art cast off, yet be it known unto thee O thou wretched soul, I am content to enter into another Covenant with thee; there is a second Covenant for life and salvation that I have made with poor men through my Son, and I require that thou should'st come in, and give up thy self in an everlasting Covenant to make me to be thy God, and to close with me and my Son in whatsoever I call thee to, in whatsoever thou hast or can'st do to give up thy self to the power of me and my Son; this thou must engage and tye thy self unto, in the strongest Bonds that can be; this is the nature of the Covenant. We know there were two Covenants, and all the good of mankind in the first Covenant depended on this, his closing with the termes of it. Now the termes of the first Covenant was, Do this and live; but that is broken, and we have lost our ability: Now the second Covenant is, Believe and live; and the soul that God pardons, he brings into the Bond of the second Covenant; it is brought to come and give it self up to the Lord, and to be content to bind it self with all bonds unto God, that he, and he only shall be my God, as I desire him to be mine, and his grace and mercy to be mine, so all that I have or can do, shall be his. I surrender up my self, and ingage my soul to be his for ever, my Estate, Abilities, whatever I have, or can do, shall be his. Now put this to your own souls, you hope your sins are pardoned: But hath God brought you into the Bonds of the Covenant? Hath God ingaged himself to you by his Word, *to be your God*? and on the other side, Are your hearts ingaged to him by the strongest Bonds that can be? and if there be any other Bonds that are stronger to tye your souls to God; Can your souls say, the Lord knows I am content and willing to be ingaged; and that you will account it your happiness to be tyed in the strongest Bonds that can be? If it be so with thee, now peace be to thy soul, thy sins are pardoned; as on the one side, God hath made a Covenant with thee, so on the other side he hath brought thee to be in Covenant with

him; then be of good comfort, thy sins are pardoned.

Thirdly, *Those whose sins God hath pardoned, he hath translated them into the Kingdom of his Son*; the Scriptures expresse these things divers ways, and they have a diverse consideration in them: Now I ground this note out of Col. 1. 13, *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*; mark what follows, *In whom we have Redemption through his Bloud, the forgiveness of sins*; forgiveness of sin is the end of Gods translating of us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, in giving Redemption through his Bloud, even the forgiveness of sin; so that whosoever God hath given Redemption to through the Bloud of Christ, even the forgiveness of sin, that is, forgiveness of sin being the special part of the Redemption we have by the bloud of Christ, such an one is translated into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God; *What shall you see?* [illegible] *The reason why sins must be pardoned before translated*, because the Scripture expresses it thus, they are *translated into another Kingdom*, a Kingdom of the Son of God, the dear Son of God; it is dear mercy of God that translates a soul into the Kingdom of his dear Son; it seems naturally we are in another Kingdom, and have another King besides the Son of God, and have another Soveraign; indeed in we are so naturally, we are under the power of Satan, and in his Kingdom, but now when God comes to redeem a soul, and grant forgiveness of sin, he translates it out of that Kingdom, and such a soul refuses to be a subject to Satan any longer, or a servant to his lust any longer: but now Christ shall be my King, the Son of God by whom I expect Reconciliation, he shall be my King, and his Laws shall rule in my heart, and his Scepter shall sway in my soul; now no more shall my own thoughts, counsels, opinions, will and affections rule me, but Jesus Christ shall be set up upon the throne of my soul, and he shall be my King: I before was led (a poor vile ignorant wretch) by the customs of others, and example of others, and what they required of me by their laws in the matters of his worship; but now Christ

shall be my King, I will expect my law from him; and all obedience I do to man, it shall be in order to this Christ my King: this is a translation into the Kingdom of God, when the soul feels the power of Christ ruling in him, and overswaying him, and the soul looks up to Christ for its protection and provision, and desires above all things in the world, to set up Jesus Christ as his King in all the ways of his Government, both in his own heart, and the world too, and longs to hear that voyce, when it shall be said, *The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*: Thus those that have redemption through the bloud of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, they are translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son; and as the Scripture speaks, *They have the Kingdom of God within them*; that is an expression of the Holy Ghost in the Gospel. Now this you are to examine your hearts upon; What of the Kingdom of Christ you have within you? Do you live, and walk as one that hath the Kingdom of Christ within you? Is Christ as a King and Soveraign over your thoughts, words and actions? And do you look to him for the law of your thoughts, words and actions, and walk before him as your Soveraign Lord, depending on him to know his will continually, and fear and honour him as a King: If the Kingdom of Christ be in you, that is, if the Gospel have an effectual work upon you; for the Gospel in the power of it is ordinarily exprest by the Kingdom of Heaven; when the Word comes to any place, the Kingdom of Heaven is said to come; it would take up a great deal of time, to shew wherein the Holy Ghost calls the Gospel the Kingdom of Heaven; but it is called the Kingdom of Heaven, because it is the Kingdom of Christ that is Lord from Heaven, and Christ rules in it by the preaching of the Gospel: But now, though it be the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingly power of Christ be in the preaching of the Gospel, yet this does not prevail upon all sorts; it is like a net that is cast into the Sea, the meaning of it seems to be nothing else, but that the preaching of the Gospel among a multitude of People, is like a net cast into the Sea, wherein some

are catcht, and others remain worldly, filthy, and good for nothing, that is the meaning of the Text, and not any warrant at all for mine Communions; but only thus; where the Preaching of the Gospel is, there are some fishes good and worthy to be received, and others that are to be cast out: Now, as there is an external Kingdom, so there is an internal Kingdom of Christ within our hearts; Jesus Christ himself sets up his Throne in the hearts of every man and woman whose sins are pardoned, that is a certain truth; and this day in the Name of God I pronounce unto you, that if your sin be pardoned, Jesus Christ hath set up his Throne in your hearts; and if you find any other Throne and Lord but Christ to rule you, know from God that your souls *are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity*, and your sins are not pardoned; but that soul, who in the Preaching of the Gospel can say, Blessed be God I have felt Christ come into my heart, and prevailed upon me; and now Christs Laws are the Laws I desire to be ruled by; God knows I know but little of them, but I will labour to understand them better; therefore I come this day, that I might know more of the Law of God, and that Jesus Christ might rule more powerfully in me than ever he hath done; if this be wrought in thee, I say unto thee in the Name of Christ, be of good comfort, thy sins are pardoned, God will shew good unto thee when this world is ended; thou art one that Jesus Christ hath brought into his Kingdom, and set up his Throne in thy heart, and therefore thou may'st be assured that he will take thee at last into his everlasting Kingdom.

Fourthly, *Where God forgives, he gives much*; giving follows forgiving; God never forgives any, but he gives much to that soul whom he forgives: As in that case when the Apostles preacht the Doctrine of forgiveness and pardon of sin, the Holy Ghost fell upon them; so certainly, where the Preaching of pardon of sin hath power through the Ministry of the Gospel over a soul, God gives much to that soul; and there are three things especially that God gives presently unto the soul whom he pardons, which have all been mentioned before in opening the blessedness of pardon of

sin; and therefore I will but mention them now to strengthen this note of tryal.

1. *Hath God forgiven thee? then he hath given his Spirit to inlighten thee in the great mysteries of Salvation*; thou pleadest thou art ignorant, and art not Book-learned; if God have so great a favour for thee as to pardon thy sin, he will give thee understanding in the mysteries of the Gospel, *Jer.* 31, 34. where God pardons sin, they shall have this mercy *to be taught of him.*

2. *God will give this unto thee, he will write his Law in thy heart*; that is, he will work in thy heart a suitable frame and disposition to his Law; that thy heart and the Law of God shall be like two copies, that have the same things in them, and vary not one title from one another; there shall be a suitableness between thy heart and the Law of God; not only to do that which God requires, because I must do it; but because I find it suitable to the new nature bestowed on me: he will write his Law in the heart; and therefore I pronounce before the Lord this day again, that whosoever has his sin pardoned, and his iniquities forgiven, that God hath writ his Law in the heart of that man or woman by the finger of his own Spirit; that heart of thine that was as a heart of stone, God will write his own Law thereon, as he did on the *Tables that Moses broke*; though always thou hast not a real sight of it, yet such a thing is there, and is a comfortable assurance of the pardon of thy sin.

3. *God gives healing mercies to cleanse thee from thy sin*, Jer. 33. 8. *I will cleanse them from their iniquities, and pardon all their sins*; cleansing from sin and pardon of sin, they ever go together; if God pardon thy sin, he cleanses thee from sin; do not look therefore only after pardoning mercy, but likewise after cleansing mercy; those whom God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder; pardoning and cleansing God hath put together: God may bestow other mercies as health, strength, and success in outward things, without pardon; but never cleansing from sin without pardon of it; and therefore if thou findest thy heart cleansed, Peace be to thy soul, thy sins are forgiven.

Fifthly, *Besides these, those whom God pardons he puts a glory upon them*; there is a glory put upon all pardoned sinners; they are indeed glorious creatures in the eyes of God and Angels, yea, and there is a glory put upon them that the Saints of God are able to see; perhaps that glory is not seen by the purblind eye of the world that are in darkness; but those that have their eyes in their heads, may see a glory put upon every soul that is pardoned, and for that, that Text is clear, Rom. 8. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*: 'tis not spoken only of that glory the Saints shall have in the highest Heavens, when they shall be in glory with Christ; but of that glory God puts upon the soul in this world; 'tis not said, them he will glorifie; but them he hath also glorified; there is no justified soul but is a glorified soul, this is a certain truth in Divinity. *But at that instant any soul is justified, at that instant he is glorified*; in *Jer.* 33. 9. there is an expression somewhat like unto that, and it follows upon pardon of sin; *And it shall be to me a Name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the Nations upon Earth, &c.* that is, I will put glory upon them, and so they shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the Nations in the world: you will say, How is that? What is the glory of a justified soul? certainly the soul that is justified is glorious; God puts a glory on it by those glorious graces of his Holy Spirit that he endows the soul withal; there is no justified soul but hath the glorious graces of the Holy Spirit put presently upon it, and so 'tis beautiful and glorious, yea the only glorious object that the Lord Jesus Christ delights in in all the world: take the poorest soul in the world, God putting his Image upon it, there is a greater glory and lustre on that soul, than is on all the Heavens and the Earth besides; take all other creatures in their greatest glory; and God sees not so much glory on them as on any one soul whom he hath justified; for so it is, Holiness and the graces of Gods Spirit are called the glory of God himself, Rom. 3. 23, 24. *For we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God*; What is it to be deprived of the glory

of

of God, but the loss of that Image of God that man was made in: but when a man is justified, that glory of God is put upon him a fresh, upon his heart, his understanding, his will and affections, and that make the Lord to delight to dwell with thee, converse and have Communion with thee, because of that glory that he hath put upon thee; so there is a glory also in the life and conversation; for on every soul that God justifies, there comes presently a new lustre upon their life and conversation: All those that have lived in horrible wickedness and base courses; now when they are changed, and they manifest the graces of the Spirit of God shining in their conversation through the whole course of their lives, in meekness, patience, humility, heavenly-mindedness, and the like; there is a lustre on their conversations, to those that are able to judge of it, they see it; and the world many times is dazled with it, they see a glory on them, and are convinc't, that certainly there is a work of God upon these men; and in their good moods they are wishing to die their deaths, and that their ends might be like theirs: the pooreſt servant, or child in a family, that was vile before, yet being justified, there is a lustre in their conversations that convinces Parents and Governours, and makes them see an apparent difference between what they are now, and what they were before; though they contemn it, yet they know that God will own that difference that he has made to be his own glory, and will declare it one day that this was the thing that was glorious in his eyes: And therefore now would you know whether you are justified; Are you glorified? What glory of God is come into your hearts, and appears in your lives and conversations? Can you say, my life is so, though I have many weaknesses, yet I hope something of the glory of God appears in me? for so it must be; there is no soul God justifies, but God inables him to live so, as the glory of God shines in the conversation of such a one: Now if these things be so, what cause have you to fear, you are not a justified person? but for the present, many times it doth not appear; for most of you darken the glory of God in your lives: you that are justified should shew it forth more in

your

your conversation among all with whom you have to do, and then what a beauty and Evidence of your Justification would it be unto you?

Sixthly, *Those whom God pardons, he makes them know what pardon means*; thou hopest thy sins are pardoned, Dost thou understand, and know what hath been said about it? certainly those whom God pardons, he causes admiring thoughts in the soul of the excellency of this blessedness of the pardon of sin; the soul is taken with the admiration of *three things*. First, *it admires at the freeness and the riches of Gods grace*. Secondly, *at the price that was paid for pardon*. Thirdly, *It admires at the wonderful good it is brought into*, and that which the soul receives by this blessedness of the pardon of sin, other things God may bestow on men and women, and they know not the worth of them, and do not mind God in them; but when God bestows pardon of sin, he makes the soul have admiring thoughts of it, and to know what it is, Jer. 33. 9. *And it shall be to me a Name of joy, a praise, and honour, and they shall fear and tremble, for all the goodness and prosperity that I procure unto it*; certainly if others shall do it, much more themselves, those whom God pardons he bestows such mercies upon, as that the soul shall even stand amazed with a trembling heart and an amazed spirit, to behold all the goodness that the Lord shews to it: Now, have your hearts been taken with it? you may know much of your Evidences if your hearts have been taken with admiring thoughts of it, for certainly when God pardons sin, he doth it to magnifie his grace, and set out to Men and Angels in the infiniteness of it, what his grace can do to poor souls; if this be Gods end, as certainly it is, then it must needs be that those whom God pardons, he gives such grace as shall cause the soul that it shall have admiring thoughts of it; Has thy soul seen so much of the grace of God, that it admires at the greatness and goodness of it? be of good comfort, thy sins are pardoned.

Seventhly, *The more assurance God gives of pardon, the more the heart melts before God in mourning for the sins that God has pardoned*, according to the manifestation of Gods mercy in

pardoning, so doth the soul by the work of Gods grace melt in holy mourning, even for those sins that God has pardoned: many think they must mourn for sin to get pardon, but when they are pardoned, Why should they mourn then? I have spoken to that before, that many mourn to get pardon, but I say, they mourn, because they are pardoned: I manifest it thus, in this evidence I give of pardon of sin; that according to the degree of knowledge the soul hath of pardon of sin, the heart melts before God for all sins that are pardoned, the 51. *Psal.* is exceeding remarkable, *David* laments his sin exceeding bitterly, but mark the *Title of that Psalm, To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba*: Now would you know what *Nathan* did when he came unto *David*, you shall find if you read the story of *David's* Adultery and Murther, 2 *Sam.* 12. Chap. it was to bring the news unto *David* of the pardon of his sin; first *Nathan* convinces him of his sin, that he should do it *before Israel, and before the Sun*, and having convinc'd him, he says further, *the Lord hath put away thy sin*: Now a secure heart might go away, and say, all is well, I shall not dye, God hath pardoned my sin, I need not be troubled any more about that matter: But mark the Psalmist, how he cries unto God, *Have mercy O Lord upon me, and blot out all my transgressions, wash me, purge me*; and then he prays for restoring mercies for his broken bones, and then cries our for further assurance, the very grace of God that *Nathan* brought to him of the pardon of his sin, that very grace of God did melt and break his heart so much the more; after God had sent him the pardon of his sin, he mourned more than ever before; we never read that *David* was so much troubled for his sin as in this 51 *Psal.* that was after *Nathan* had come unto him: Now if you find that at that time when God is pleas'd to come unto you in the Ministry of the Word, or in private to declare unto you the pardon of your sin, and to give you the comfortable Evidence of it, that then your hearts are most devoted to mourn for them, and to melt before God, Be of good comfort, thy sins are pardoned.

Eighthly,

Eighthly, *Another note is this, that according to the degree of pardon of sin, so all other graces grow*; the knowledge and assurance of Gods love in Christ in the pardon of sin, it causes all other graces to grow proportionably, as you have it in *Ephes.* 3. 19. about the knowledge of the love of God in Christ, mark the connection, he desires *That they might comprehend with all Saints what is the height and depth, &c. and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God*; What is the love of Christ? the love of Christ is the procuring cause of the forgiveness of sin before God the Father, and when you know this, this will fill you with all the fulness of God: Mark, first *It brings God in to the soul*; And secondly, *Fills the soul with God*; And thirdly, *Fills the soul with the fulness of God*; And fourthly, *Fills the soul with all the fulness of God*; when you come to know the love of God in Christ, if any thing in the world will fill the soul with all the fulness of God, this will: many will say, they hope their sins are pardoned; Do you so? then you *know the love of God in Christ*, for this is a special work of the love of God *in Christ*, to pardon sin; now the Apostle says, when you come to know this, you come to be filled with all the fulness of God; What is the fulness of God? as faith increases with the rest of the graces, so you grow fuller and fuller in Gods fulness; and so you grow more into a fuller assurance of pardon of sin: now the soul can say, as I find more assurance of the love of God in his Son, so I find my soul more filled with this grace of the fulness of God. Alas, when I was under the Law, God and I were strangers, I felt little of God in me, but now I begin to know the love of God in the Gospel, I begin to have my soul filled with the fulness of God, not with chaff and drois and filthy things, which heretofore my thoughts, will, and affections were filled withal, but now 'tis otherwise with me, my soul is now filled with all the fulness of God, certainly that soul that can say thus, may well go away with that word of Christ spoken to the woman, Luke 7. 50. *Go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee*: Rom. 5. 1. The Apostle speaks of pardon of sin, *being justified by Faith, we have peace with God*, that is, God

revealing justification by Faith in Christ, it brings peace with it; *and, by whom we have access, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulation, knowing that, &c.* What knowledge is this? It's this, that we are justified by Faith and so come to have peace with God; How does this cause the heart to be inlarged? we rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, and not only so, but we are strengthned and can glory in tribulation, our hearts grow up to that strength, that whatsoever tribulations we meet withal, we are able to bear them with patience, and not only so, but to glory in them, we not only grow up to bear that which many cannot, but to rejoice in them, that is more, and then to glory is above rejoycing: No, Do you find that the assurance that you have of the love of God, brings strength in to your soul, to inable you *to rejoyce in hope of the glory to come?* as the Apostle had said, let what will become of us for the present, what though the world scorn us, hate, persecute us, yet we rejoyce in hope of the glory that is to come, and this makes us *glory in tribulation, knowing, that tribulation works patience; patience, experience; and experience, hope:* Here's a working of several graces together, and this may help many a poor soul. O says the soul at such a time, I had a great deal of assurance of pardon of sin, and much joy thereupon: But have not Hypocrites joy? yes certainly, a Hypocrite may have wonderful ravishments of spirit, and flashes of pardon of sin, but yet there is somewhat wanting in other graces; but how shall I know that my assurance of pardon of sin is right? thus, according to the degree you have of assurance of pardon, you have an answerable degree in the growth of other graces, as Humility, Patience, Heavenly-mindedness, Self-denyal, and the rest, according as your faith grows, so you have a proportionable growth in all other graces; faith is as the root, and the more sap there is in the root, the more will the branches grow: those people that are so full of assurance, and never doubted, as they say, but is for other graces they are empty, as the Fear of God, Meekness,

Meekness, Patience, Self-denyal, Heavenly-mindedness and the like; certainly, if thy faith be so high, and thy other graces so low, thou hast much cause to fear thy faith is not right, 'tis not the *faith of Gods Elect*, as the Scripture speaks, it is not *precious faith*; for according to the degree you have of that, all other graces will grow; you hope that your sins are pardoned. How come you by it? the soul that hath true pardon of sin, hath fetch'd it from Heaven in a right way, in Gods own way; How is that? it is on this wise; the soul that sees it self lost and undone through the guilt of sin, God revealing his infinite riches of grace in the Gospel, such a soul seeing God on his Throne, holding out his Son, God-Man as Mediator to make an attonement, it by a mighty work of faith, closes with that glorious way of Reconciliation by the Son, that it sees God the Father tender to him, and so fetches grace out of the Treasury of Gods bounty, in the way of the Gospel, in an Evangelical way that was before opened. Examine now, Have you fetch'd out your pardon through the way of the Gospel, that the soul by a mighty act of faith hath been willing to venture it self and its eternal station on that Son of God? Have you look'd on Christ as a mighty Mediator, as one able to save you? then you have acted faith in a Gospel way, and your sins are pardoned. Again, Are you pardoned? then you are sealed, that you heard likewise of; there is the Broad Seal of Heaven that stamps the Image of God upon the soul, as the Image of the King is on the Seal of the Kingdom, so the Image of God, the Broad Seal of Heaven is stamp'd upon the soul, which I mention that you may make use of it in examination.

Ninthly, *Whomsoever God pardons, there will be an answerable work on thy soul unto the work of God in justifying thee*; as in Election and Vocation, so in Justification. How is that? thus, that as God notwithstanding all thy sin, accepts of thee to his grace and love; so notwithstanding all the trouble and afflictions that are in Gods ways, thou wilt accept of God and his ways; he accepts of thy soul, notwithstanding thy sin, thou wilt accept of him and his ways, notwithstanding all evils and afflictions that be-

company them, there are woful evils of sin that accompany thy soul, yet God will accept of thee; so there are great evils in the ways of God, Afflictions that accompany them, yet thou wilt accept of them and think it reasonable? What, shall God accept of any soul, notwithstanding all the evil of sin, and shall not I accept of Gods ways, notwithstanding all the evil of affliction and trouble? certainly, the soul that is pardoned, cannot but answer God so far as this, Will God justifie me notwithstanding my sin? I will justifie God notwithstanding any trouble, affliction, difficulty, or sufferings that may befal me in his ways, and I will justifie the ways of God; this is both an Evidence and a duty; God justifies our souls though they be very sinful, we have cause to justifie Gods ways, though they be very troublesome; if thou dost not so, thou art none of Gods child; for *wisdom is justified of her Children*; thou hopest thy sins are pardoned, and that God will justifie thee; and wilt not thou justifie him? Does not thy sin hinder Gods grace to thee, and shall trouble and affliction hinder thy glorifying God? O man! thou hast too vile a heart, and too base a spirit, to be one of those that God hath pardoned, if thou were a child of Wisdom, and one whom God hath pardoned, as God hath justified thee, so thou wilt justifie God. This note may meet with those that in company their Ministers and the ways of God cryed out against, and yet have not a word to speak to justifie God, perhaps Gentlemen and others speak ill of Gods ways, and thou standest sneaking and hast not a word to say for God and his ways; Dost thou think God hath justified thee, and dost thou hear God and his People, and his Word reproached, and thou hast not a heart to justifie God?

Tenthly and lastly, *Those whom God pardons and forgives, he puts in them a merciful frame of heart to forgive others, and that upon Divine grounds*: there is a kind of natural forgiveness: many will forgive, but it is as a Heathen forgives another, and it is a shame for many that profess themselves Christians, that they do not go so far, but you must forgive in a spiritual way, for this is the way that accompanies pardon of sin, to forgive, because I have had more forgiven;

given, such a one hath offended me, but how much more have I offended the Lord; and if the Lord forgive me, ought not I to forgive him? you know in the Gospel he that had so many Talents forgiven him, and afterwards went and took his Brother by the throat, how ill the Lord took it, that having forgiven him so much, he should crack of his Brother the utmost farthing. Hath God forgiven thee thy sin, which had he not, it would have everlastingly chained thee in torments, and wilt not thou forgive? for as it is an Evidence, so it is a duty and a part of Prayer in that divine Directory called the Lords Prayer, Math. 6. *Forgive us as we forgive*, and in another place it runs thus, *forgive, for we forgive*; therefore thou can't have no Evidence that God hath forgiven thy iniquities and pardoned thy trespasses, except others be in thy thoughts forgiven too: I might have given divers Scriptures, but I mention it as a duty, that you that have any knowledge of your sin pardoned, would make this as a ground to forgive your Brethren; say, Alas poor wretch, hath God forgiven me; was there ever such a distance between my brother and me, as there was between God and me; and hath God forgiven, and shall not I forgive my brother? It is impossible a soul should be made acquainted with the rich mercy of God in forgiveness of sin, and have not a meek spirit to forgive his brother: Nothing can take away the rugged sowrness and rigidness of one man towards another, but the Oil of Gods grace in pardoning of sin; and that coming once into the soul, makes the soul to be of a sweet, mild, gentle, kind and tender frame: Observe this, you that have rugged natures, you say it is nature, and you cannot help it, if any thing change it, it is the mercy of God in pardoning thy sin; is there not so much in the grace of God in pardoning thy sin, as to change that rugged nature of thine? certainly there is: else thou hast little hope that thy sin is pardoned; therefore if God hath pardoned thee, thou must go and do so likewise. I am perswaded many of you hop'd and longed for this * Sermon, and I desired to be the larger

* Note the figns were given forth in one Sermon.

larger, because I would lay the Evidences full before you; here you have had the blessed man and woman described unto you; but there is but few of them, few can go away and say, as we have heard, so it is; But I hope divers of you can, it was for you that it was preached and sent from Heaven that you should feed upon it; and 'tis as needful as the bread you eat. But there is one thing more, that is very meet to annex to all that hath been said before; without that, I am afraid there are many to whom the consolation of this Text and Point belongs unto, will go away with false comfort, because they know not how to apply them, and that is to give some Rules how to make use of these signs, and to be able to apply them; and by the same Rules you may come to know any other notes of Trial concerning your spiritual Estate, and to make use of them in any other particular whatsoever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Rules how to apply the Evidences of Pardon of Sin.

IT is a matter of great concernment to us, to try whether our sins are forgiven; for in times of danger our hearts are ready to sink; but the Evidence of this, that our sins are forgiven will hold up our hearts in the midst of the greatest dangers whatsoever; if Heaven and Earth should meet together, if I have assurance of this, for so it follows, after *David* had pronounc'd him *blessed whose sins were forgiven*, Verse 6. *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him*; there may be floods of great waters, but he that hath his sins forgiven, *God shall preserve him and compass him about with songs of deliverance*; but they that have their sins compass them about, shall have horrour and terrour to compass them about; but says *David*, having assurance his sins were pardoned, *Thou art my hiding place, and thou shalt compass me about*; therefore if your hearts close with those Evidences given, you may have comfort in the *great water floods, God will be a hiding place unto you*; it concerns very much to labour to put this out of doubt, and not to put it off to a sick-bed, or death-bed time of examination; but now to those Evidences there is another thing, which is of great concernment in this Point, and that is to give some rules how to make use of those or all other Evidences that shall be given at any time for tryal of any: Especially for the tryal of our states in point of Justification or Sanctification, but they will be helpful to the use of any other Evidences whatsoever.

First is this (that you may be able to apply those rules of Trial and Evidences given) *though you cannot find them all, yet if you find but any one of them, you may receive comfort from that, though you feel not the rest*; you may be assured that the rest are there: Many a soul, many times hears Evidences of the happy condition in point of pardon of sin; and it may be,

there is one, two, or three, that they can catch hold on; but there are some others they cannot take hold of them: if thou findest but one of them in thy heart, though thou can'st not feel or see the other, yet God doth see the other to be there within, though they be not made so sensible to you; and therefore soul take hold of that which you can see or feel, and be assured the other are there, though they are not seen; if thou can'st take hold of one link of a chain, and all the other be fastened to it, thou may'st be able to draw the whole chain unto thee; for by taking hold of one link thou takest hold of the whole, though thou toucheſt not the other; so in the work of Gods graces, they are as a link united to one another, and if you can lay hold of one link you may be assured of the other, although you see them not; it is with many in this point as it is with some ignorant man, the Phylician tells him, he must take such a thing that must have these and these ingredients in it; and when the Apothecary has mingled all, it may be but one of these things can be seen in the colour and outward appearance; perhaps some one syrup may take up all the colour in the outward part; and when it is brought to him, says he, I must have so many ingredients in it, and I see but one; I, but though you see but one, yet there may be the efficacy of all in it, though but one give the colour; so it is with the graces of Gods Spirit, though at the present some one appears, yet there may be the efficacy and power of them all in the soul, though there appear but one; perhaps it is in this case, as among many ingredients you can see and taste but one, yet there may be the power of twenty there, though neither seen nor tasted; so it is with the work of God in the soul, sometimes it may be, that there is but one grace to be seen, tasted, or felt, and yet where that one is, there are all the other; so that, that is one rule, when you look for Evidences and Signs, if you can find but one in your souls, all are there; as it is in sin, where one sin hath Dominion over the soul, though the others be not seen, yet we are to know that other sins have dominion over the soul too; though some men live under the slavery of one sin more than another, as one man under the power of

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Covetousness, another under the power of Ambition, or any other sin; this man may be thought to be under the power of but one sin, but the truth is, he is a slave to all sin; every natural man that is out of Christ, is under the power of every sin, he is a slave to the Devil in every sin; but by reason of the constitution of his body, and for some outward respects, he may refrain from some particular sins that do not so well suit with him, whereas if it would serve for his own ends and purposes, he could as well commit any sin as that one; this is a certain truth, *Whosoever makes not Conscience of every sin, he makes Conscience of none*; though he refrain from the practice of some others, it is not out of Conscience, but for by-ends; therefore he that is under the power of one sin, is under the power of every sin. Many think all men are sinners, and for their parts they have but a few; such a sin I cannot leave, but I am free from all others; Dost thou keep from all sin but one? God will find thee under the power of every sin, and God will charge thee at the Tribunal as under the power of all sin; so now on the contrary, Gods people are mightily troubled that they cannot find the work of Gods graces in all of them, such an one they find, but they want it in another, because it is not so evidently stirring as the other; but as the truth is certain on one side of the wicked, so 'tis true on the other side of the godly, that where there is one sin there is every sin, so where there is one grace, there is all grace, there is the power of godliness in every grace, where there's one grace, that is the rule to help us in making use of the Evidences before hath given. The

Second rule is this, *When ever we have found any one Evidence upon serious examination in the presence of God, and now it appears not positively to the contrary at the present, but thou are meerly dubious of those things that heretofore thou hast felt, because thou dost not feel them now, in this case we may and should have recourse to what God has wrought heretofore*, and build upon the former workings of Gods Spirit upon us; true it is, when we come to give Evidences in our Ministry of those that have grace, we may meet as such a time with them as

that they have sense of nothing, and in such a condition as that they are not able to know their own hearts, nor feel any workings upon them. Now, if it be meerly from want of sense, and that the contrary positive evil appear not; but only the want of feeling of what thou had'st and felt heretofore; thou art to have recourse *to the days of old*, as *David* often speaks that he would *remember the days of old*; it may be you will say, some Hypocrites have thought they have been in this condition, they have had many frailties, and yet they have proved naught, how can we have recourse to what was before when God did work upon me? *I can indeed remember when God did draw my heart, and then I thought I could have closed with any Evidence out of the Word, I felt such workings in my heart, but I might speak that and yet all be but in hypocrisie.* I answer, that certainly the bare want of sense is not ground enough for me to think that all was in hypocrisie; for this consider if I groan under it as under an affliction, and would fain feel those former manifestations I had formerly, and that I can take little comfort in my present case, and that my soul is continually longing and panting after the workings of Gods grace that I heretofore had; if this be so, and that there is nothing to the contrary, thou falleſt not off to sin, or to the world to satisfie thy soul in sinful ways, and that thy heart is yet panting after God; if it be thus with thee, thou may'st take the comfort of what thou had'st before, and feed upon it as Provision laid up before hand for thy soul, as if thou had'st it present. But Hypocrites that fall off from the visitations of Gods Spirit, they fall not off only to a want of sense of those former movings and workings of the Spirit, but their hearts come to be satisfied with something else, and they take up with some other contentments, and 'tis not a want of feeling only of what they had heretofore, but their hearts run out from God into other ways of sin and wickedness, so it is with Hypocrites, but thou hast this testimony, that it is not so with thee, that although thou doſt want the present sense of the work of God upon thee, yet thy heart longs after God, and thou art unsatisfied in this condition, and 'tis the greatest affliction that

ever befel thee, and there is nothing else that thou letteſt thy heart run out into, but thou art longing to get thy heart into that bleſſed ſtate that thou waſt in heretofore; then certainly *peace be unto thee*; thou art to look back upon what thou haſt had heretofore, and wait upon God for his return again, for he will come, and thy ſoul ſhall rejoyce again in him; *As that Martyr Mr.* Glover, *a little before he ſuffer'd, the Spirit of God ſeem'd to leave him, and he was in extream darkneſs, and had no feeling of any Evidence of Gods love to him, yet he was to dye the next day, and all his Evidences were laſt in his own apprehenſion yet his friends told him, that God would appear, and deſired him to give them ſome ſign, if God did come unto him, that night he was in darkneſs, and until the Officers came to carry him to the Stake, he had yet no ſenſe or evidence of Gods love, but when he was tyed to the Stake, he cryed out, He is come, He is come:* ſo that you muſt not argue, becauſe you have no preſent ſenſe, that therefore you have no evidence of your good condition, but if you have had it heretofore, you may build upon it that your ſtate is good, although you have no preſent ſenſe; that is the ſecond Rule.

The third rule is this, *To help you how to make uſe of ſigns when you would put your ſelves on tryal, you muſt take heed you do not caſt your Eſtates for the tryal of your ſelves on times of temptations*; judge not of your eſtates by what you find and feel in times of temptation, for they are very unfit times to determine your condition upon a tryal then, as when temptations are exceeding ſtrong, and horrour and fear comes into the ſoul, and perhaps ſome here may know what I mean, when I ſpeak of horrour and fear coming in ſtrongly upon them, then it is a time that you had rather need to call upon God, and fall down upon your knees in Prayer, than to look to the tryal and examination of your ſelves at that time. It is with many in this caſe as it hath been with ſome that have been ſtruck with horrour of death before the Judge, and have had the Book given them to read, though they have been good Scholars, and able to read before, yet when the horrour of death hath been upon them they have not been able to read one word, and ſo it is with many of Gods children

children in times of strong temptations; they are not able to read their Evidences; so Children when their eyes are blear'd and blinded, give them the Book and they cannot read thereon: so when your hearts are under great temptations and afflictions, this is not a time of trial; then by the way, if it be not for a godly man, much less for a wicked man: many wicked men put it off to the day of death, and never so much as put themselves to trial, till horrour of Conscience or fears of death put them upon it; it is an ill time for Gods people to try themselves then: Suppose you would weigh Gold, you will not do it in a storm or wind; the trial of our estate is like the weighing of gold; *for we are to weigh our selves by the balance of the Sanctuary*, that we may know whether we shall be weight when God comes to weigh us; for every soul must be weighed; and wo be to those to whom God shall say as he did *to Belshazzar, when the hand-writing appeared upon the wall, it was so terrible to him, that his knees smote one against another*; But what was that? *Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found too light*: such a hand will many find one day. Poor soul that thoughtest thy self in a good condition, and that thy sins were pardoned; thou art weighed in the balance, and art found too light; therefore it concerns you now to weigh your selves in the balance of the Sanctuary: when you weigh gold, you must not hold the Scales in the midst of wind, storms and tempest that hurries the balance up and down; but it must be in such a place that you may hold them steadily that nothing may stir them; for in the wind the lighter may be blown down, and the heaviest uppermost; but if you hold them in a still place, you may try to a grain: so the Soul of man is like the Scales in the wind, in a time of temptation thou wilt have enough to come in to turn the balance, lift it up, and make thee seem too light; and therefore when you would weigh your condition, do it when your hearts are composed, and you are your selves; when your hearts are quiet, then lay your souls to the balance; many weigh their hearts in a time when trouble and affliction is upon their spirits, but they cannot do it, all they do then is nothing; there are but two

things

things, then to be done, either to open your condition to some or other that may help you; or else fall down upon your knees in Prayer to God, to get help from him to support you under, and deliver you from the temptations that are upon you; but then 'tis no time for a man or woman to try themselves in times of strong temptations, when it may be said, a man or woman then is scarce themselves.

The fourth Rule for trial of your Estates is this, *That when you find the Word on your side in any thing, never let go your hold of the Word*, when you are perswaded the Word speaks well of your side in such or such a thing, never do any thing against it; as we must not receive any comfort but by the Word, so we must not reject any comforts but by the Word; some may say, I find something in the Word that makes for me, but I am afraid I am not thus and thus qualified; but do you find any thing in the Word that gives you ground to think so? we must rest upon the Word both ways, as we must not receive any thing to build our comforts on, but it must be from the Word; so we must not receive any thing to trouble us but it must be from the Word; it must be the Word must wound men; for the Consciences of men and women are under the power of no creature, but the Word: Now as there is no power in any creature in the world to raise a dejected soul, and to comfort a troubled Conscience truly but the Word; So the people of God are to know, that they are so above the power of all other things, that nothing in the World should trouble them but the Word only: as they should account it a weak vain thing to rest in the opinion of others for the comfort of their souls, that are in a good condition by what they find out of the Word; so they should account it a vain thing to rest on their own conceits in time of trouble, or in the saying of others, besides what they have out of the Word; the soul says, I am afraid my state is not good; *But O my soul, is there any thing in the Word that says thus; that they that are thus and thus are not pardoned:* As I must not conclude I am pardoned, but must bring something out of the Word that says

says it, so I must not conclude my state is bad without the Word say so too; but I find many distempers and many wandrings in my soul; give me leave to ask you this, where doth Gods Word say that such a man that hath a great many wandring thoughts is not justified? where does the Word of God say that a heart that is under the remainder of some corruptions, and the soul labours under them as much as under any burden in the world; where does the Word say that that soul is not justified? many people in the case of trouble of Conscience, although they have some evidences and good ground out of the Word for them, yet will have many fears and doubts because of the remainder of such and such corruptions in them; but now the ground of their doubts is their own fears, and nothing out of the Word; and so when any speaks and applies the Word unto them, they cannot say but it is suitable to their condition, and that God hath shewn mercy unto them; but so soon as you are gone, the fears and suggestions of their own hearts prevail against them, to take away all their comforts more than all the applications of the Word prevailed to uphold and continue their comforts; it is just with many that are gracious, in the case of fears and doubts, as it is with the wicked in regard of their hopes, a wicked man hath the Word against him, that he is not in a good condition, but his own self-love and conceit incourage him to presume that he is in a good estate; now he regards his own opinion and conceit, and presumes upon that, that his estate is good, more than on whatsoever is said unto him out of the Word that it is not so: so the people of God although they are in a good estate, yet their own fear so damps their hearts that makes them question that it is not so, but the ground of it is their own fears, as the ground of the wicked in thinking their estate is good is from their own opinion, so the People of God many times from their own conceit and opinions, rather than from the Word, think their estate is bad: Take this Rule, *As you must receive no comfort but out of the Word; so you must not receive any trouble but from the Word*; when you receive trouble any other ways, you do not consider that God has laid your estates so high that

all

all your troubles depend on nothing but the Word, and therefore answer all with Scripture, when the Devil casts temptations before thee, bid him prove that thy estate is not good from the Word, I have this out of the Word to prove it is so, and thou hast nothing to the contrary: in other things you will not be baffled, as in your Evidences for your Estates, suppose a man come and lay claim unto it, although you cannot perhaps make out your title clear, yet you will bid him prove the contrary, and shew what grounds he hath to lay claim to it, 'tis not the clamours and talking of other men that will make you quit your hold, or satisfie you that it was never right y yours: But let the Devil come and clamour against your souls, and you are ready to joyn with him, and say, it is so indeed, I am an hypocrite, and I have no true grace nor spiritual life, my soul is under the curse of the Law and dominion of Sin still: how unworthy do you carry it to the blessed Spirit of God, and all the grace and goodness of God that has been manifested and made known unto you concerning the pardon of your sins? How unbefitting is it that on every clamour of Satan, and stirring of corruptions in your own hearts, that you should raze the foundation of all your comforts by calling all the work of God presently into question? Many a poor creature that finds by Evidences out of the Word that their estate is good, they go away chearful, but if the next day there be any stirrings of corruption, they let all go, and raze the foundation of all their comforts: walk not so unworthy of the grace of God, depend upon the Word, as for your troubles, so for your comforts, as you are not comforted with any thing but from what the Word of God speaks to you, so be discouraged with nothing but where you find the Word of God against you.

The fifth Rule is this, *When at any time you are put to seek your Evidences, and cannot find them, the best way is rather to rest than to spend time in finding of them*, as suppose any man or woman be searching out such Evidences for Salvation which they had before, and cannot find them, it may be they are poring upon their own hearts for such and such

workings as they have had heretofore, and cannot find them, and so are ready to conclude that all is naught, and lie down as people disconsolate, because their condition is not good, they cannot find such Evidences as heretofore they had; now in this case, the best way is, if I cannot find my Evidences, or the use of them I had before, to renew them, the time I spend in seeking and discouraging of my heart, if I spent it in actings and workings of my heart after God, for the renewing of my Evidences, perhaps I might have renewed them in that time, as in matters between men and women in this world, they have Evidences that would clear the matters in differences, but perhaps they cannot find them, or they are grown so old that they cannot read them, and they spend a great deal of time about them, whereas possibly, did they go to the Court of Roles, they might have them renewed with less charge and time, so it is with the soul, when it cannot find such and such Evidences, it spends a great deal of time, and sits down in discouragement and disquietness of heart, when as perhaps in less time thou mightest have renewed them, as thus, suppose thou art looking after this Evidence of thy Calling, for God calls whom he justifies; Now thou art looking after thy call, and thou art troubled that thou dost not remember how God did work upon thy heart then, or heretofore, and a great deal of time is spent, cannot you find how 'twas with you then? No, then fall upon this course, listen to what voice of God thou hearest now in thy heart, say to thy soul, *Do not I now find the work of God in me, do not I find him now drawing of my heart out of the world unto himself, and does not my heart listen unto the call?* for the call of God is not only at first conversion, but God is always calling and drawing the heart from the world unto himself, if thou can'st not make use of the work of God heretofore, make use of his present work upon thee: Again, those whom God justifies, they enter into Covenant with God, for it was by way of Covenant (as I told you) they give up themselves to God in an everlasting Covenant: But when did I come into Covenant with God? I am afraid I am not the man or woman in Co-

venant

venant with God, I cannot remember any such work; perhaps thy heart sinks down within thee, because thou can'st not clear up this work of entring into Covenant with God heretofore: Now the time that thou spendest in seeking after this work, spend it in entring now into Covenant with God at this present time; it will be no hindrance to thee that thou can'st not find what was heretofore, if now at this present thou can'st surrender up thy self to God in an everlasting Covenant, this is enough, do it: Now if you can find your hearts, now come in, and yield up your selves into Covenant with God, you may have the comfort of this Evidence as fully as if you clearly remembred all the former transactions, and the work of God upon you in your first entring into Covenant with God: Again, those that had their sins pardoned, I told you, were brought into the Kingdom of Christ, but you will say, I cannot remember how I was translated, *Take now upon you the Scepter of Jesus Christ*; many trouble themselves, saying I never found such humiliations and troubles for sin as you speak of, or as others have found, How is it now with your souls? Do you find sin now a burden to your souls? Is it not the greatest affliction? If you were put to your choice, had you not rather suffer any thing in the world than sin against God; *and not only out of Convictions of Conscience, but because you find a frame of spirit in your hearts suitable thereunto?* for an Hypocrite he may have Convictions of Conscience, but the frame of his spirit is not suited thereunto: in you there is a frame of spirit suitable to the convictions of Conscience within you, though you cannot remember you have had such sorrows and troubles in convictions for sin, as others have had while they were under the spirit of bondage, yet you may be comforted by the present frame of spirit that you have; and so in the like cases, if you cannot find your old Evidences, fall to work to renew your Evidences, and do not spend time in lying down under the discouragements of your own hearts.

The sixth Rule is this, *When you examine your selves to find out your Evidences, carry this thought along with you, that you*

have to deal with God in the Covenant of grace: and this will be of marvellous use unto you; perhaps to some these are very dry things, and they see but little in them, and scarce know what they be; but I hope there be many others that have knowledge of an eternal state to be between God and their souls; I hope I speak things will be very precious to them; yea, I say unto many of you, for while I am in this argument, I am speaking to such as have had the fear of God fall upon their hearts, and they have made it the great business of their lives, above all things in this world, to know how terms are between God and their souls, to know how it stands with them for their everlasting estates, I know abundance of people scarce ever call these things in question, to whom these Rules will be of little or no use at all; but if I speak to some, or any one troubled soul to help and direct them, though I do no good to others I shall think my time well spent; wherefore then in your examinations ever carry this with you, that you have to deal with God in the Covenant of grace, and not in a Covenant of works: Certainly, that many are so troubled in their Consciences about their eternal estates, it is on this ground, because they look upon God in the way of the Covenant of works; if they find any corruptions stirring and breaking forth, and temptations strong upon them, they think presently all is naught, and that God will never accept of them; What is the reason? If we had to deal with God in a Covenant of works, the least stirring of corruption, it is enough to cast the soul down into eternal horrour, as *Adam*, though he had never so much goodness before by the Image of God upon him, yet one sin eternally cast him, if there had not come in a Covenant of grace: Now, though people will acknowledge there is a Covenant of grace, yet upon the stirring of their corruption, they carry it as that it serves for no other use than if they had to deal with God in a Covenant of works, and as if there were no Covenant of grace at all: Now, what a dishonour is this to the riches of Gods goodness in the Covenant of grace, that tells us, *We are not to be judged for our eternal estate by the Covenant of*

works;

works, and tell me that he that offends but in one, falleth for our moral condition, our Advocate with the Father, and calls to us, that God accepts of the uprightness and the sincerity of the heart, and that the want of perfection shall never damn the soul: He that stands before the Lord to make intercession, and to be our Advocate to plead with the Father for us, he it is that must be the Judge of our spiritual estate; and therefore when I set my self before the Lord, I consider that I have to deal with him in a Covenant of grace: Suppose I find and feel such and such corruptions and weaknesses in me, Is it not possible that my estate is happy by the Covenant of grace? Collect your selves, and say, Why do I determine of my everlasting condition? Have I to deal with God in the Covenant of grace, and cannot these imperfections stand with it? Why do I make such conclusions that my state is naught, because of the stirrings of such and such corruptions? The doubts and fears of most Christians arise from hence, because they have not a clear understanding of the difference between the Covenant of grace and the Covenant of works; there is nothing in the world would so satisfie the Consciences of men and women, *so a clear understanding of the Covenant of grace and the Covenant of works:* Many people cry out of the Preachers, that they disquiet and trouble the hearts of people by their Preaching, the truth is, no Preachers occasion so much the trouble and perplexity of Consciences, as those that preach Morality and meerly the way of duty, and never come to make them see clearly the difference between the Covenant of grace and the Covenant of works, and I appeal unto you, who are they who most quiet and settle your Consciences, and satisfie your spirits, Are they not those Preachers that open the difference between the Covenant of grace and the Covenant of works? Certainly those Preachers that shew you what the Covenant of grace is, are the only men that quiet and satisfie Conscience; and 'tis a truth, that nothing can do it but that: You that are Christians, how should you then labour to get a further insight into the Covenant of grace, and instead of other Disputes less useful, let this be the subject of your Discourse, the difference of the

Covenant of works and the Covenant of grace, or the blessings of this Covenant, and that this is the Covenant that we must depend upon, notwithstanding our weaknesses: And now I am speaking of this Covenant, that weakness may stand with the Covenant of grace, many that have carnal hearts may be ready to abuse it; take notice how dear the comforts of your souls cost God, and God will have his Ministers to comfort you, though the revealing of such things will indanger many a mans soul. God is content to hazard the damnation of other men to comfort you; for certainly those things that we speak for your comfort will be the damnation of many others. Think thus, O Lord must the comforts of my soul cost so dear, and that for my comfort many souls are hazarded, who by taking occasion to sin, abuse that grace that is reached forth to me, and so are like eternally to perish? O then, what need had I to make good use of this grace that comes to me with the hazard of the souls of so many others? If a man should bring some precious Balsom to apply to a wound, and tell him there is not one drop of it but cost a thousand pound at least, would not this be highly prized? Now, when we come and shew you any thing that may comfort your hearts and satisfie your souls, we must reveal such things, that not only cost much, but the least drain of Gospel-comforts cost that which was of infinite worth, and is valuable two ways: first, every drop of the Balsom of the Gospel cost the blood of Christ; but besides this, the very revealing of it must cost the damnation of many souls, and yet God is content to venture that, that you may be comforted: We in the Name of God come and preach the grace of the Gospel, and we think many will be hardned by it, and grow more secure, and abuse Gods mercy; but when we satisfie our selves with this, that the comforting of any broken troubled soul is so precious in the eyes of Jesus Christ, that he is content to venture the hardning of many other souls; if they will be hardned let them be hardned, Christ is content to venture it; and hereby we see how precious these comforts are; therefore you had need to prize them, and not cast them off: as suppose a Captain for the saving of the lives of two or

three

three men should venture the lives of a thousand men meerly to save the lives of two or three, were not these mens lives very precious to him? so Jesus Christ he ventures the hardning of the hearts of many for the comforting of a few; therefore it shews your comforts are precious things, you should not easily put them off, for they cost dear.

The seventh Rule in applying Evidences is this, *That when you cannot see the work of faith reaching to Assurance, yet labour to put forth the work of faith of Adherence*; there may be much of the workings of the faith of adherence, where there cannot be the faith of assurance; that is certain, there may be true faith adhering to Christ for the pardon of sin, where the soul hath no certain assurance of it. Many poor creatures are crying out, and saying, if I had faith of assurance, and a full perswasion my sins were pardoned, I could be comforted; but because they have not attained to a full perswasion and assurance, they think they have no grace at all; but there may be faith in the pardon of sin, where there is not a reflect act of the soul, whereby I come to know it hath faith, and that its sins are pardoned, 1. *Joh. Chap.* 2. 3. he shews there that there may be knowledge, and yet not know they do know; *Hereby we know that we do know him, if we keep his Commandements*, hereby we know that we do know him: now knowing of Christ, and knowing that we do know him, is not all one, there is a knowing, and a knowing that we do know him; so *there is a believing and a knowing we do believe*: there may be a true work of grace that I may know Christ, and know him to salvation, and yet not know that I do know him, that is, by a reflect act of faith, a knowing that I do know him; so then, where there is not a faith of assurance, there may be a faith of adherence, that is, when the soul sticks to Christ, and can give it self unto, and venture it self upon Christ for pardon of sin, life and salvation, that is faith of adherence: suppose in seeking my Evidences (many of them being taken from the effects and fruits of faith) I cannot find them, and so cannot put forth a reflect act of the soul, which is faith of assurance, yet I may at that time have a faith of adherence, thou may'st feel thy heart stick to Christ, and

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thou may'st venture thy soul on Christ, that faith will save thee, though you have not a faith of assurance, that is, though you cannot find such Evidences whereby you may draw up such a conclusion, or make up such a Judgment that you are pardoned, yet if you have a faith of adherence, that you can stick to Christ, and venture your souls on him for life and Salvation, and all that is good; that faith will save you; and therefore upon examination of your Evidences, when you cannot get up to such acts of faith as assurance is, live then by a faith of adherence, stick to Christ, say, here I will resolve to live and dye, venture of the grace of God in Christ: Now for the soul to do this, it is a mighty work of faith, for if you can venture your souls on Christ, you will venture your Estates on Christ, your Names on Christ, and all that you have on Christ, and therefore remember, if you have not a faith of assurance, then venture your selves on Christ by a faith of adherence, and comfort will come in that way.

Eighthly, *If at any time you feel comforts from Evidences flow in upon your souls, and that you are able to apply the comforts to your selves, that the Lord hath spoken to you by such and such signs of a pardoned sinner, take heed you do not rest much upon Evidences*; but then at that very time, think with your selves, though now I have comforts, I may lose them, and God may call me to another condition, God never granted these helps unto me for my Saviours that I should rest upon them, they are but bladders to help me to swim, and God may take away these, and call me to live upon the meer actings of faith, and not at all on sense, that's certain, he may do it, for when we bring these Signs and Evidences of grace, as they come from faith, and are effects and fruits of it, they are but as bladders to help young swimmers that cannot swim without them, and learn them to swim; but those that have got the Art, though the bladders be taken away, they can swim; but take them away from the others, and they will sink; so that these Evidences are for young and weak Christians that cannot live on primary acts of faith, which a strong Christian can do, when all other things are taken away; and therefore when we feel the comfort of any signs depend not on this

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the Lord may take them away; and because he delights in the meer actings of faith, that is the reason why God withdraws himself from the souls of his people that they shall not have the use of Signs and Evidences as they had before, because he would teach them to live on the more necessary acts of faith; God loves the voice of *Job, though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*; I will venture my soul upon him, whatever becomes of me; when there's nothing else to rest on but God, then to live by actings of faith meerly on him, he delights much in this; and therefore take heed you do not rest so much on signs, as if all your comforts were lost and you undone, when you cannot have such use of them as you have had heretofore.

Ninthly, *when you have at any time lost the use of signs, do not determine that all is gone, and that you shall never have the use of them more*; this is that that mightily hinders many poor Christians that are in trouble of Conscience, because they cannot find the evidence of the pardon of their sins, and that God accepts of them in what they do; what do they do presently? they yield to the horrible sentence of damnation against themselves: Gods Spirit, say they, is now gone, and he will return no more; he will never come any more unto me: take heed you do not fasten any such kind of thoughts as those are, to determine of your own estates, or that Gods Spirit will not come again: but do you humble your souls before the Lord, and wait upon him.

Tenthly, *When at any time all Signs and Evidences fail you, and you are ready to determine that all is gone, yet even then keep up good thoughts of God*; As the Spouse in the *Canticles* when her Beloved was gone, yet she prized him, and said, *He is the chiefest of ten thousands*, in *Cant.* 5. when she was asked, What is thy beloved? says she, he is thus and thus, & then concludes, *He is altogether lovely*; and this was at such a time as he was gone, yet she retain'd good thoughts of him; so 'tis a good sign for any soul, that when trouble of conscience is upon them, or any other trouble, that they retain good thoughts of God and Christ, and the ways of God, when the soul says, whatever become of me, though I perish for ever,

yet God is good, his Word, his ways are good, his Gospel and the Covenant in his Son is good; and whatever troubles are upon me, yet God is righteous: and although God justifie not me, yet I will justifie God; if there be any soul that cannot find his Evidences, or any of those signs before spoken of, you may make use of this: if you cannot find any other, do what thou can'st to justifie God; thou art afraid that God will not justifie thee, *do thou justifie him*; sometimes it is with many men, as with some wretched servant that has dealt falsly with his Master, and may be all the while he can make any advantage of his Master for his own ends, he will speak well of him, but if his Master turn him out of doors for his wickedness, then he rails on him; 'tis ordinary for bad servants to do so when they are turn'd away for their wickedness; and so it is with many, when all goes well with them, then they like well of the wayes of God; but if they come to such a condition as that they think that God will cast them away indeed, and that they are like to perish, then they begin to have hard thoughts of God, and by degrees, they speak against God and his ways; take heed of this, although you want the Evidences of his love and mercy, yet retain in your hearts good thoughts of God and of his ways, and this will be a special help to bring into your souls the comfort and assurance of your Justification; and now I have done with this argument, I have shewed you who it is that hath his sins pardoned, I have shewed the several mistakes, and I have shewed you certain infallible grounds from Scripture Evidences of the pardon of sin, and Rules how to make use of those Evidences; and now upon what you have heard, you have testimony and assurance of the pardon of your sins, or you have not; if you find your hearts do not answer to these Evidences, or that you are afraid that your sins are not pardoned, then take a use of Exhortation to put you on to seek after this blessedness.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of Exhortation to ſeek after Pardon of Sin, with Cautions and Rules, how, and what we are to do.

I *Am now come to a uſe of Exhortation*, and it concerns us all, either thoſe that are not pardoned, or thoſe that have aſſurance of the pardon of their ſins; for there is none that have aſſurance but may make uſe of it: Chriſt taught his Diſciples to pray daily for the *forgiveneſs of their treſpaſſes, as well as for their daily bread*, and what we are to pray for, we are to ſeek after; ſo that it concerns all; bleſſedneſs is deſirable to all, it is as natural for man as a reaſonable creature to deſire bleſſedneſs, as it is for the fire to burn; only here's the great miſtake in the world, all would have it, but they look not for it in the right way: Now after all that has been ſaid, that thou may'ſt not have ſlight thoughts of the pardon of ſin, and ſay, I hope they are pardoned, and the like; I ſhall ſpeak to awaken thee: ſuppoſe thou wer't now ſet on the brink of the infinite Ocean of Eternity, and the bottomleſs Gulf were ready to devour thee, and the Records of Heaven were opened, and there ſhewed thee that thy ſins were not cancelled, but remain upon the file? What thou would'ſt then do, do it now; for this is our time, and this is the great work of our lives, not to cumber our ſelves about many things, but about this one thing, to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling; this is the great work to ſeek to ſecure this bleſſing of the pardon of our ſins, which is the foundation of all; in the obtaining of it we obtain all bleſſings; it ought to be our chief care, and we ought to lay out our chief ſtrength and endeavours in ſeeking of it; and if God would be pleaſed to put his hand to your hearts, and turn the ſtream of your thoughts and indeavours, the very turning of your hearts after this buſineſs is a great mercy; there is ſo much bleſſedneſs in it, as not only the obtaining of it, but the very

motion of the heart this way is worth all the world, in *Act.* 2. we read, *there were many thousands that had their hearts pricked at hearing the Word preached, and they cryed out, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* O that there were a disposition in the hearts of men to cry thus; we see it is our blessedness if we have it; and if we have it not, we are all cursed for ever; What shall we do to get it? *Mar.* 10. 17. we read *of one came running after Christ, saying, What shall I do to be saved?* O that your hearts were now in such a frame to come running after Christ, saying, What shall we do that our sins may be pardoned? but before I come to any thing else, it is necessary by way of caution or proviso to lay three or four things.

First, *This; that although I must seek after God for the pardon of sin, yet know there is nothing in a natural man that is or can be acceptable*; all his endeavours have not that in them that can gain him acceptance with God: But then to what purpose are we to endeavour to do any thing? yes, we must be striving after the pardon of sin, although without Christ we can do nothing; and *a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, yet it is to purpose that we be doing, for God likes well the exercise of the work of common gifts; though they are not saving, and to eternal life, yet God likes the exercise of them so far as there is any thing good and commends them; when *that young man came to Christ*, Mar. 10. 21. *Christ look'd upon him and loved him*, though not with such a love as to save him and bring him to eternal life, yet God did discover love to such a one; therefore *it is to some purpose that a man should put himself on doing what he can, if it be only for that.* 2. *It is to some purpose that the heart be stirring after God and Christ, because hereby we shall evidence that we are not so negligent of God and Christ, and the things of eternal life as we were before.* 3. *It is to some purpose, for in the stirring of the common works of Gods Spirit, God many times comes in with saving works*; for God works not upon men as upon stocks or stones, but God puts them on by stirring up the common works of his Spirit, and at that time when they are most in stirring, it is Gods usual way to come in with

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the saving works of his Spirit; therefore it is not to no purpose that we are putting on poor creatures to do what they can.

The second Caution is this, *That whatsoever any one doth in seeking after Christ before he has union with Christ, it is not to be reckoned on as the condition of the Covenant of Grace or a Gospel work*; there are no preparatory works for the receiving of Christ, that are the condition of the Covenant of grace; though they be such things as we must follow after; yet they are not the condition of the Covenant of grace: Now that that is the condition of the Covenant of grace, sanctifies him that hath it, and follows upon our union with Christ; though God uses to carry on the soul in the way of legal terrors, humiliations, and the like; yet these are not the work of the Covenant of grace; and therefore this may help many a poor soul about terrors of Conscience and humiliations; that are troubled that they never had those degrees as others have, why as they do not prepare and fit thee for Christ; so the want of them is no hinderance to the receiving of Christ.

The third Caution is this that follows on the other, *That though you put your selves upon the use of all means to the receiving of Christ, yet take heed you do not rest in any of those preparatory works*; there's a great deal of danger in that; many souls mistake, and it is to be feared it is in this, the resting in something that they have done; it may be God has awakened their Consciences, and they fall upon working, upon humbling and reforming themselves, and here they rest; but this is a mistake, you must not rest until you find you are in Christ, and until there be an union with Christ and your souls; the work is not therefore done because you are humbled and reformed, and run another course to what you did before, for Rom. 9. 16. *'Tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*; not of him that *willeth*, that is, that hath some good affections to it; nor of him that *runneth*, that is, though his endeavours be never so strong, yet 'tis not of him neither; many think they have peace in their souls

upon their good desires and endeavours, when their hearts are mightily stirr'd, and they wonderfully inlarged, then they make no question but all is done, and they quiet their hearts with that, and think there is no further work to be done; but it is not so; *Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*; though we must will, and we must run, yet there may be *running and striving to enter in, and yet not enter*; this is a very great Point, to let us see all of us what need we have of the free grace of God in pardoning of our sin.

Fourthly, *Though God does not tie himself to come in to pardon upon these preparatory works going before, yet it is worthy of the utmost endeavours of any soul in the world, that there is a possibility of the obtaining of it*; though God tie not himself to give pardon on those works, yet there is enough in it to require the utmost endeavours of any one to be laid out. Could we do ten thousand times more than we can, even the very possibility of obtaining pardon, is worth the calling forth of all our strength; know that the very possibility of having sin pardoned, is enough to set all your hearts a work to seek after it, though God do not tie himself to come in then and pardon; 'tis not thus, that God would have his creature seek unto him, and then all should be left unto that seeking; no, for if that were granted, that God did foresee something that his creature would do, and upon that he would give him pardon, then all the world would be saved; but all the world do not what they can; if God had tied himself to come in then when men do what they can, all the world might be saved; but it is not so: God hath left it so that he will have his creature (do what he can) to relie upon him; and when he doth come in, then he enters into the greatest and strongest bonds that can be to do his creature good, but I come to inforce the Exhortation for to seek after the pardon sin.

Quest. *You will say, How must we seek it?* and what is to be done?

First,

First, *In the seeking pardon of your sins set your selves as in the presence of God*, and put this upon your souls, I am now looking after the pardon of sin, but how do I do it? does my heart work so in it as that I can satisfie my own Conscience in the work I do? that it is such a work, that may testifie my high respect to God from whom I seek it; is it such a work as manifests that I am sensible, it is a business of the most infinite concernment that I have in all the world; and am I sensible of the infinite Power and Majesty of God as one that is infinitely above me? when you seek after pardon, you must do it so, as that you may be able to satisfie your Consciences that your seeking is such a work as does hold forth the glorious greatness of that God that you are seeking after; many pray slightly, as God be merciful to me, and mumble over a few words, and have done, does this hold forth that they have such an apprehension of the greatness, of the power of that God they seek after? surely no; that's the first. Answ.

Secondly, *If thou wilt seek after pardon of sin, it must be such a seeking as may testifie that thou dost prize thy life here in this world above all thing else in it*; because God gives thee time in it to seek after him; Is thy seeking such that manifests the time of thy life is given thee for this very end? if you were sensible of this, you would seek it in another manner than you do; you would seek it as a condemn'd man seeks his pardon; for certainly, every man is a condemn'd man, and the time of your life is like a condemn'd mans time, between his condemnation and execution: Now does your seeking testifie and witness that you spend your time, and that your hearts are so stir'd in seeking pardon, as that it holds forth you account your lives precious, and use it for the same end, to get the pardon of your sin? If a condemn'd man have time to seek a pardon two or three days, and he follows drinking, playing, and the like, certainly none would apprehend this man spent his time, as if it were given him for to get his pardon; look upon the courses and lives of most men; and are they such that do testifie they live to that very end, to seek pardon? if men were

were so sensible of it, as they should, they would cry and weep, and lament unto God for the pardon of their sins, and so carry it as would testifie they prize their lives at a high rate for this end, that they may seek the pardon of their sins.

Thirdly, *It must be done so, as that you may have this testimony in your Consciences, that you never sought after any thing in the world so as you sought after this*; though it was never so an important occasion, yet there is nothing after which your endeavours have been so powerful as after this; I appeal to you in this place; is the work of your souls after pardon so, as that in your own Consciences you can say, if any business ever took up my heart, this hath, if ever my spirit was up in any thing in the world it is in this; certainly, unless it be so, you have not done that that God requires of you.

Fourthly, *You must so do it as apprehending God is ready to be gone, and to turn away from you*; you must so seek after him, as apprehending, for ought you know, that God is just a going away; and if thou hast it not now, 'tis uncertain whether thou shalt ever have it; the soul must cry as a poor Malefactor does when the Judge is on the Bench, he cries all that while; but when he is ready to rise, and is going off, then he cries mercy, mercy; when he thinks, if he let him go, then he shall never see his face more; he cries then to purpose; so should it be with every soul that understands the danger of losing of it; you should so seek after it, as looking on your selves standing before God the Judge of all the World, having the sentence of death out against you, yet for the present God is looking on you, and admits of you to look on him; but so as apprehending God ready to turn aside, and you know not whether ever he will grant you such an opportunity of seeing him any more; O then if a man would seek after God as ready to turn aside from him, and for ought he knows, he should never see him more: Certainly, if you know the evil of sin, and the blessedness of pardon of sin; What a deep impression would such an apprehension make upon your hearts?

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *So seek after it as that thou may'st testifie thou would'st sanctifie the great Name of God in it*; I do not say thou can'st do it, but thou must endeavour after it, and desire that that which thou dost may have some resemblance to it; there is no work that ever God did from all eternity, that hath so much or more of his Name in it, than this work of the pardon of sin hath; this is a positive work of God, and is for this end *to declare his Name*; the works and Counsels of God about this was the greatest thing that ever God did; you heard much concerning the glory of God in this work in the opening of the Doctrine: Now what I put you upon in the use is this, *That in seeking pardon of sin, know you are so to endeavour after it, as your endevours may hold forth the apprehensions your souls have of the great Name of God*; certainly this sanctifies Gods Name when we perform it so, when there is a work upon our souls suitable in some measure to the excellent and glorious Name of God that appears in some measure in the work that we are conversant about: as suppose it be the speaking of any attribute of God, then I sanctifie Gods Name, when there is that reverential respect to God in reference to such an Attribute; so when I give God praise for a mercy, I sanctifie Gods Name when there is a work upon my heart suitable to that glorious Name of God that appears in that mercy bestowed on me; so if I seek after God for a blessing, then I reverence Gods Name, when there is such a disposition in my heart, that is somewhat suitable to the glorious Name of God that appears on that blessing: so in endeavouring to sanctifie Gods Name in seeking after pardon of sin, thou dost it then, when there is such a frame in thy heart as may hold forth to Men and Angels, that this work of thine hath some kind of suitableness to the glorious Name of God that appears in it; this is to sanctifie the Name of God, and this is a great work; this is the great thing for which thou wast made, and this is the great thing for which the counsels of God, yea the deep counsels of God were set a work from all eternity: Now the dispositions of our spirits must be such, as may manifest the great end, the wisdom and counsels of God had in

it, and therefore it must be a great work that must manifest that; for certainly those whom God pardons he makes them understand what pardon means. Now then, if thy seeking be such as that thou knowest what it is thou seekest after, then it must hold forth also that thou dost understand the Name of God is exceeding glorious in it; and then as thou doest apprehend this, so accordingly thy heart will work after it; and therefore when you are alone, and you find you hearts working this way, say, What do I do? Do I so call upon him, and seek after him, as that this work of mine declares to God and my own Conscience I seek for it so, as that I may manifest the glorious Name of the great God is in it? certainly if I do not do it thus, *I take Gods name in vain.*

Sixthly, *Further, you must seek after it as if you were now to answer for all your sins before the Lord, as you would wish you had done it then,* so do it now; I put it to every one of you; Have you not been on your sick-beds, and in your apprehension near unto death, hath not God awakened your Consciences, and you have been afraid upon the account of your sins; what kind of temper your souls have been in then, know it concerns you every day in the whole course of your lives to have the same apprehensions as you had at that time, do now as then you would have done: certainly thou dost not understand what pardon of sin means, if thou dost not seek it thus.

Seventhly, *Do it as thou thinkest in thy Conscience the Damned souls in Hell would do if God should give them a possibility.* What would they do if God should proclaim unto them a possibility of pardon? what would they do? divers things you may conceive they would do; and here it comes up fully to my hand to put you upon it, to say, *O! what shall I do?* Were we to preach to them in Hell, do you think that there is any one of them but would mightily cry to the God of Heaven, 'tis not like that any one of such an Auditory but would mightily cry to God, if the great counsels of God concerning pardon of sin were preach'd to them, and will not every one of you now mightily cry to God for it? certainly if they would

would do it in Hell, Why ſhould not you do it now? that which you think they would do, not with a few ſlight vain expreſſions, do you do now with all your might.

Eightly, *Do this: ſo ſeek after it as to deſire if it were poſſible that you might bring as much glory unto God, as he would have had of you if he ſhould have damn'd you for ever*; this is an excellent frame of ſpirit though you do not know it, but though you do not, yet you ſhould put your ſelves upon ſuch a kind of work, and God may come in, you cry out for pardon, but never cry out for Gods honour, O what ſhall become of the honour of God that he hath loſt by me, and the diſhonour I have brought to him, ſay, *O Lord I have diſhonoured thy Name, O that I might ſo honour thy Name as I have diſhonoured it*; O Lord thou mighteſt make up thy honour in my eternal damnation; but O Lord, I would if I could do any thing that might make up that diſhonour that I have brought by my ſin, if I could do any thing that thou mighteſt have any honour in, I would do it: for a cloſe, I ſhall put this for a conſideration to you; *whatſoever you would do upon any ſuppoſition, ſuppoſe your danger were as great as ever it was in all your lives, what you would do then do it now*; you muſt do all that can be done by a creature: Now if you would do more on ſuch a ſuppoſition as this, after all thoſe ſermons you have heard of the evil of ſin, and now of the great bleſſedneſs of the pardon of ſin, if you do not do what a creature is able to do, How can you look for pardon of ſin in the face of God? and therefore what you would do on any ſuch ſuppoſition, do now, though thou ſhouldeſt not get pardon; ſuppoſe ſuch a thing as if thou wert now ready to be damn'd, yet is it not better to do it, than not to do it? Having ſpoken of theſe general things, I come now more particularly to the other part of the Queſtion, *What is to be done?*

Firſt, *This is to be done, be ſure thou takeſt off thy heart from all other imaginary bleſſedneſs*; certainly there is no man in the world but hath ſomewhat elſe his heart was running out after; now thou muſt get off thy heart from that thing whatever it be; it may be thy heart was ſet upon friends, or upon pleaſures of the fleſh, and thou thoughteſt thy ſelf happy

the more thou had'st liberty for thy lust, and the like; now thou must be convinc'd *that thou hast fed upon ashes, and hast not been able to say there is a lie in my right hand*; but God hath now shewed me there is a lie, and I have look'd for happiness elsewhere; but now I see it is not there to be found, win thy soul fully to this; O my soul art thou taken off from all other things, hath God convinc'd thee that thou may'st have honours, riches, pleasures, and yet be a Reprobate, wo unto me for the time that I have lost, I have laid out my time and mony for another blessedness, that is no where to be found but in the grace of God.

Secondly, *Let conscience have free liberty to shew thee thy sins, and charge them upon thee*, yea to accuse and condemn thee, and do thou help thy Conscience; when Conscience accuses and condemns, then do thou condemn thy self; if thou would'st be pardoned, then give Conscience scope and liberty; 'tis very dangerous when God begins to stir the hearts of men and women, to make any stop or give any check to Conscience there, the wisest course is to give Conscience liberty, for it will have liberty one day to accuse and condemn you; Why will you not now give it liberty? Conscience will one day bring all thy evil deeds before thee and accuse thee; now let it accuse and condemn thee, and certainly if thou dost so, thou art in a very good way to come to have absolution of thy sins in thy Conscience now; for at the great day the Books shall be opened: Now bring as it were a day of Judgment upon thy self, contract the Throne of God into your own hearts, and call for the Book of Conscience, and say, Conscience, What say'st thou against me that I may get it blotted out now, that it may not be read against me at the day of Judgment?

Thirdly, *Be willing to own all thy sins*; confess, discover them with all the heart-breaking circumstances and aggravations thou canst possible, the Lord knows thy sins whether thou confessest them or not; but God will have thee to come and lay them open, God will have thee to come and charge thy self with them; 'tis a very good thing to open Conscience freely before the Lord, not in a slight way, but in a way of anguish

guish and bitterness of spirit bewailing them, and crying by way of Prayer and Petition against them.

Fourthly, *Be willing to accept of the punishment of sin*, say O Lord, as thus I do charge and acknowledge, bewail and cry out of my sins; so here I am Lord, ready and willing to accept of the punishment of my sin, and the soul that is in this frame is in comfortable way of pardon of sin.

Fifthly, *Resolve to avoid sin whatever come of it*, at that very time when thou art seeking pardon of sin be sure to resolve never to sin again, for know, that for ought thou knowest, the very next sin thou committest may make God come upon thee for all thy former sins. And then

Sixthly, *Cast out whatsoever is gotten by false ways, make restitution*, as *Zacheus* did, *Luk.* 19.

Seventhly, *Be sure that thou be put off with nothing else but pardon of sin*; never rest keeping thy soul always in a waiting frame, looking up to God for pardon: To all these things I shall add, that all these must have reference to the great work of the Son of God, when you cry out, *What shall we do?* though I have spoken of divers things, yet know all is with reference unto Christ the Son of God, God-Man; look upon him as the head of the second Covenant offering up himself for our sins, let thine eye be upon him, and as thou givest thy Conscience liberty to charge thy sins upon thy own soul, so charge them upon Christ the head of the second Covenant; have an eye to him for the discharge of them; Dost thou vomit up thy sin by confession, and cry to God for pardon? remember that thou cry to him through the mediation of Jesus Christ; look upon him *that must make up the breach, restore thee to favour, and remove the curse:* in every work be sure thou eye Christ, and make use of these rules so, as may further the venturing of thy soul upon Christ; except thy soul rise to this, to work thee to Christ, all the other is but a natural work, though as I said before, that thou shouldest let Conscience condemn thee, and that thou have anguish of spirit, know all these are but natural works, any further than they serve in reference unto Christ: And now I have shewed you what you are to do, What is it that you will do?

will you set up your resolution, that through the grace of God in Christ, whatever hath been told you, you will set about the same, then happy are you; but if you do it not, it may be you may wish you had done it when sin lies heavy on you; then you will cry that God would be merciful to you, but then God and Conscience will say, I warned you at such a time, in such a place, and were not you there put in a way to seek after pardon? What did you do after you went away? the next day you went among your Companions, and were as drunk and as wicked as ever before; if it be so, then trouble will be upon you; it may be some poor creature that sat in the same pew with thee, had a heart to seek pardon, and is absolved before men and Angels, and at the day of Judgment shall sit at Christs right hand, and thou that heardest the same Word, and hast neglected it, now comest to have thy soul for ever lie under the weight and burden of thy sins: God forbid that there should be such a difference made; thou hast heard the way, seek after the pardon of thy sin; let it not be in vain that all these Sermons have been preach'd unto you, *Act.* 10. 43. when they preach'd about pardon of sin, it says *to him give all the Prophets witness*; O that you might come in and give witness that this day remission of sin was preach'd unto you; O that while you hear this Word, the Holy Ghost might fall upon you, that you might have your hearts fired with strong resolutions, to set about this work in the power of the Holy Ghost, and rest not in any thing on this side of a pardon: Now I come to give you some incouragements, and they will work two ways, either draw you to Christ, or for ever stop your mouths, that you shall have nothing to say against him. I shall name fifteen incouragements unto you.

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CHAP. XX.

Of Encouragements to seek after Pardon of Sin.

FIrst, *The time of your life is given for this very end, to seek the pardon of your sins*; if a man have any great business to do that concerns his life, and another comes to him, and says, Sir, this is the very nick of time that you have taken, or else you had been lost for ever, so this is the very nick of time given you to get pardon of your sins and interest in the blood of Christ.

Secondly, *This time is not only afforded for this end, but the means the Lord hath brought you under is a great argument that he intends mercy for you*, and you may conclude there are more of Gods Elect may have pardoning mercy than in former times, the light of the Gospel breaks forth, and certainly there is more to be brought in, the Gospel is the fruit of Christ's death, and given for the Elects sake, *Act.* 18. 9, 10. he bids him *go and preach, for he had much people*, he should have opposition, but go, be not afraid, for I have much people in that place, 'tis true, the rain will fall upon the tiles as well as on the tender herbs and grass, but certainly where God sends his Word he hath people to be gathered in, and if you take notice of Gods Providence in this point, it may much incourage you to come in, certainly there be many in this Congregation, and in others, where the Word is preached, that he will pardon, Mar. 10. 46. *The blind man hearing it was Christ that past by, he cryed for mercy, and many charged him to hold his peace, but he cryed the more, and Christ stood still, and called him unto him*: now if thou seest thy sin, and cryest for pardon, Christ will call thee to give pardoning mercy to thee as he did to *Bartimeus*.

Thirdly, *It may be thou art not only under the means of grace and the outward call, but thou begin'st to feel an inward call*, there are some stirrings of Gods Spirit within thee; thou could'st say before, thou wonderedst what the matter was with

with people to run after Sermons, but now thou begin'ſt to feel the effect of it, *And the glory of God appears to thee in this place, when thou art hearing of his Word*; thou may'ſt hence reaſon; as *Manoa's* wife, Judg. 13. 23. *That certainly if God had intended to have killed us, he would not have received a burnt Offering and a meat Offering at our hands, neither would he have ſhewed us all theſe things*, to ſay to thy ſoul, if God had intended to kill me, he would not have been ſo willing to have drawn me after him, neither would he have ſhewed me all theſe things, and let that be an incouragement unto thee.

Fourthly, *The end why God continues this world in being, is that he might give pardon to his Elect*; certainly this world had been diſſolved long ago, if it were not that he might bring pardon to his Elect, and to thoſe that ſee their ſins; this muſt needs be a great incouragement to a ſoul, *viz.* to thoſe that ſee their ſins, to come in; when this pardoning work is done, *Chriſt will deliver up his Kingdom to his Father*; if a Malefactor ſhould come to ſue out his pardon, and one ſhould ſay unto him, 'tis well Sir you are come, for the King would not have kept his Court ſo long there, but that you ſhould come in; were not this a great incouragement? ſo ſay I, were it not that men ſhould come to get the pardon of their ſin, the Court of the world would have been broken up long before this time.

Fifthly, *The principal ſcope of the Scriptures is for this very end, to reveal the pardoning grace of God*; you have here the heart of God laid open; Chriſt wept and mourned that ſinners would not come in, that they might be *pardoned* and ſaved. I have read a ſtory, *that in* Athens *there was a Temple, and in that there was a woman weeping, and in one hand ſhe had a bleeding Heart, and with the other ſhe was writing Pardons*; ſo Chriſt he ſtands weeping over you, that you will not come in, and he hath a bleeding heart, bleeding for you in the one hand, and with the other hand he is ready to write you a pardon, *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. nay, he does not only weep: But the

Sixth incouragement may be, *He ſends his Ambaſſadors to*

woo

meet you to come in, and tells them they shall not take a denyal at your hands, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *They intreat and beg in his Name*, nay it is the beseechings and intreatings of God himself; as if a King should send one of the Attendants on him to a poor condemned Prisoner, and say, Go tell such a one that he must come for his pardon, and tell him, I beseech him, and take no denyal of him, I beseech him to come in; would not this manifest the great willingness of the King to pardon; God does so, he sends his Ministers and beseeches you to come in and take a pardon; 'tis as certain God speaks thus by his Ministers, as if you heard God speaking by himself, this should move you to come in, *Christ begs and intreats you to be reconciled*, that his blood might not be shed in vain: seeing it is so, that God begs of thee to come in, why shouldest not thou come in, and take pardon of thy sin, Why can'st not thou come in and give up thy self and all thou hast and art to him?

Seventhly, *Know it is the great office and work of Christs mediatorship to bind up the broken hearts of wounded sinners*, Isa. 61. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me, he hath sent me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound*; this in the New Testament is applyed to Christ. Now this being the great work for which Christ came into the world, to bind up the broken-hearted, see whether thou canst not rely on Christ by an act of faith, this should be a great incouragement.

Eighthly, *Consider that, that God thou hast to deal withal, his nature is mercy in the abstract*; and if so, he is free in his mercy; as the Sun shines, because it's the nature of it to shine; so the mercy of God must needs work freely, because it is his nature; as the fire burns naturally, *Exod.* 34. and *Mic.* 7. 18. *God pardons because he delights in mercy*; thou say'st thou art a poor sinner; well, though it be so, yet thou may'st say, though God can see nothing in me, yet seeing that he is a God that delights in mercy, this may move me to come in: For

1. *He hath more delight in pardoning any sinner than in all the creatures of Heaven and Earth*; God delights in all the

works of his hands; but in this he delights in more than in all; he delights in them all, but not so much as in magnifying his grace in Jesus Christ; for in this he magnifies his Son, and therefore he hath more pleasure, and takes more delight in pardoning a poor humbled sinner, than in all the works of his hands besides.

2. *No one can take so much pleasure in the salvation of his own soul, as God doth in pardoning of thy sin*; and the reason is, because this is the greatest design that God hath, which is the setting out of his glory in his pardoning mercy in Christ, and therefore this may be a great incouragement.

3. *God is more delighted in the work of thy heart closing with free grace, than in all the legal works of humiliation*; what says Christ? *this is the good will and pleasure of God*; and *David* was called *a man after Gods own heart*; Why? because he was a man that would do his will; so that this is a great incouragement, though many abuse this and pervert it to their own destruction, yet God will have it taught, that thou mightest have the comfort of it, and therefore thou shouldest close with God and come in, and take hold of his pardoning mercy.

Ninthly, *Though God hath taken such a way in mercy to pardon sin, yet he loseth nothing in his justice*; Christ hath taken such order that his glory shall no way be diminished, his justice shall be satisfied; and therefore thou need'st not say thus, I have so sinned against God that I know not, that I cannot tell how to make up his glory; for there is care taken for that already, and therefore that need not discourage thee.

Tenthly, *There are as vile sinners now Triumphing in Heaven as any of you that are here, be you never so black and vile*, and therefore be not discouraged at the greatness of thy sins; for though they be very great, yet that may not keep thee out, others as vile as thou art, are now in Heaven.

Eleventhly, *Make the utmost of thy sin thou can'st, yet this need not hinder thee to come to God for it: for ought that either men or Angels know thou hast as much interest in Christ as any Saint in Heaven ever had*, and if thou comest in and layest hold on Christ,

Chriſt, thy very laying hold on Chriſt will plainly ſhew thou haſt a right unto him, and therefore be not diſcouraged but come in.

Twelfthly, *Upon thy cloſing with Chriſt, thou wilt find ſuch a change as was never wrought in any creature beſides*; for though thou wert vile and filthy, more vile and filthy than a child new born by original and actual ſins ingendred in thee, yet thou ſhalt be made cleaner than a child, and more pure in the eyes of God than any child cleanſed from his filthineſs; would not you do any thing to be pure in the eyes of God, make uſe of what I ſay, and you ſhall be clean; when you hear the Miniſters utter the threatnings of God you fall out with the man, and ſay, he preaches nothing but terror; alas 'tis our delight to preach the pardoning grace of God; but we muſt ſhew the evil of ſin, and it is that you might come in and imbrace mercy; for know, we delight to preach mercy more than any thing elſe; and know, that if thou deſireſt that all thy thoughts, ways and actions may be for Gods glory, he will not upbraid thee for coming in unto him, Joh. 6. 37. *He that cometh to Chriſt, he will in no wiſe caſt out*; though thou haſt been never ſo great a ſinner, yet thou may'ſt come in and cloſe with Chriſt; for he that comes to him, be he what he will, he will in no wiſe caſt out.

Thirteenthly, *Thou wilt fill Heaven with joy, and there will be more melody in Heaven than at the coming in of any Prince to his Kingdom*; and I may ſay unto you, even in this place, if you come in, the Angels will rejoyce at it; for there are many Angels ſtand about you; therefore take heed of your carriage, for they come to ſee your behaviour; have a ſpecial care your hearts be ſet upon the work you come about, for they are here to ſee how you carry your ſelves.

Fourteenthly, *In obtaining pardon of ſin and cloſing with Chriſt by faith, thou art made heir of the whole world.* Rom. 4. 13. How does many of you Marriners, and others venture upon dangerous Voyages to get great Eſtates in this world, and you count them happy that are born to great Eſtates; Why, by cloſing with Jeſus Chriſt by faith for remiſſion of ſins, you are made heirs of the whole world, I mean not of

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Fifteenthly, *For any thing thou knowest thou art one of Gods Elect, and there is nothing thou art to do, but God hath promised to inable thee to do it*; for there is such a transaction between God and Christ, that he that shall be saved shall not have only favour vouchsafed unto him, but shall be inabled to do whatsoever God requires of him, there shall be grace given to every one of the Elect of God. And now if thou comest in and givest up thy self, and all that thou art, hast or can'st do to Christ; How knowest thou but thou art one of those that are Elect, and so shall be made for ever happy? But if after all that has been said, thou goest away with slight thoughts of this rich and transcendent grace of pardoning mercy, and dost not set presently upon the work to obtain it, *Be thou for ever ashamed and confounded, but let the pardoning mercy of God be for ever magnified.*

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2 The means you are under, argues that God intends mercy for you. ibid.
3 From the stirrings of Gods Spirit thou may'st argue God intends thee good. ibid.
4 The world is continued for this end, that God may gather in his Elect. 216
5 The Principal scope of the Scriptures is for this end, to reveal the pardoning grace of God. ibid.
6 God sends his Ambassadors to woo you. 217
7 It is the great work of Christ's Mediatorship to bind up broken hearts. ibid.
8 God whom thou hast to deal withal, his nature is mercy in the abstract. ibid.
1 He more delights in pardoning any one sinner, than in all the Creatures of Heaven and Earth. ibid.

2 He takes more pleasure in saving thee than thou dost thy self. 218
12 God more delights in the work of thy heart closing with him in grace than in all Legal Humiliations. ibid.
9 Christ hath satisfied Gods Justice. ibid.
10 As vile sinners as thou art, are now in Heaven. ibid.
11 Make the utmost thou can of thy sin, yet this need not hinder thee to come to God. ibid.
12 On closing with Christ thou wilt find such a change as was never in any creature besides. 219
13 Thy coming in, will fill Heaven and Earth with joy. ibid.
14 Thou art hereby made heir of the whole world. ibid.
15 For any thing thou knowest thou art one of Gods Elect, and so there is nothing that thou needest doubt, but he hath promised to enable thee to do it. 220

CHAP. XX.

Of Encouragement to seek after Assurance of Sin.

1 The more you are troubled for sin, the more God intends mercy for you. 219
2 The more you are troubled for sin, the more God intends mercy for you. ibid.
3 From the Purity of Gods Spirit when he works Grace in us, we may argue God intends there good. ibid.
4 The world is condemned for that God may gather in his Elect. 216
5 The Principal scope of the Scripture is for this end, to reveal the Love of God. ibid.
6 God puts his children to labour to meet you. 217
7 It is the great work of Christ's Ministers to bind up broken hearts. ibid.
8 God when he is angry, still intends his nature is mercy in the end. ibid.
9 He more delights in pardoning any one sinner, than in all the sins of Saints and Devils. ibid.